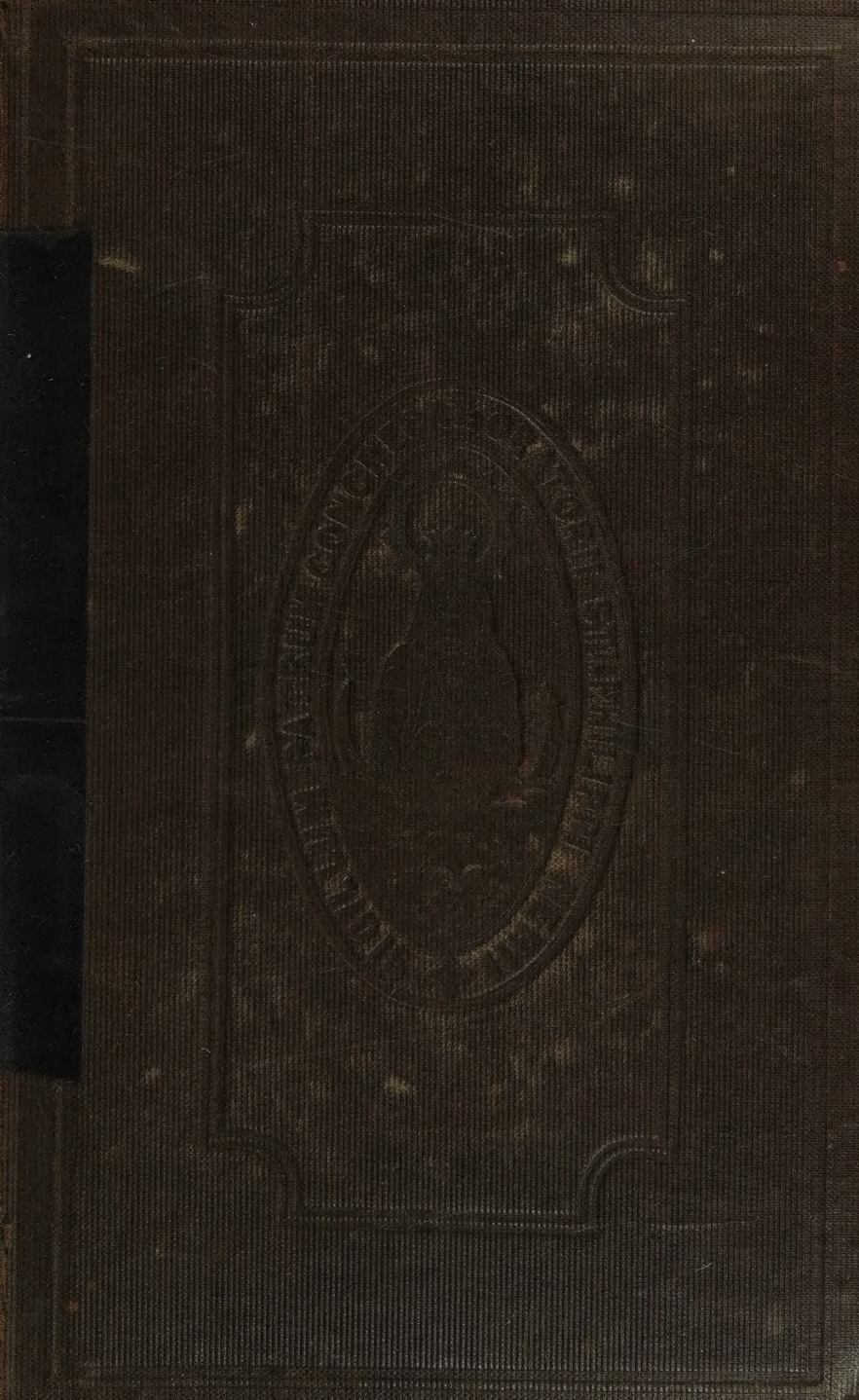

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BENITIÆ.
No. 922/8.

MODERN SAINTS

AND

Servants of God.

S. JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL.

The Saints and Servants of God.

LIFE OF

S. JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL,

FOUNDRESS OF THE ORDER OF THE VISITATION.

FROM THE FRENCH OF THE

REVD. MOTHER DE CHAUGY.

"Gaude Maria Virgo, cunctas hæreses sola interemisti in universo mundo."—*Antiph. Ecclesiæ.*

VOL. I.

LONDON:
RICHARDSON AND SON, 172, FLEET STREET.
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M.DCCC.LII.

We hereby approve and sanction the Series of Lives of the Canonized and Beatified Saints, the Servants of God declared Venerable, and others commonly reputed to have died in the odour of sanctity, now in course of publication by the Congregation of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, and we cordially recommend it to the Faithful, as calculated to promote the glory of God and of His Saints, the increase of devotion, and the spread of our holy Religion

Given at Westminster, the Feast of the Nativity of our B. Lady, A.D. 1851.

N. Cardl. Wiseman

ACC 4746

TO

THE NUNS OF ENGLAND,

WHO SHIELD THEIR COUNTRY BY THEIR PRAYERS,

AND BY THEIR MEEK AUSTERITIES

MAKE REPARATION FOR ITS SINS;

AND TO

THE SISTERS OF MERCY,

WHOSE CHARITY IS THEIR INCLOSURE,

WHILE FOR THE LOVE OF THEIR HEAVENLY SPOUSE

IN HIS POOR AND SUFFERING MEMBERS

THEY DENY THEMSELVES

THE PEACE AND PROTECTION OF THE CLOISTER.

Daughters of Mary! in retreats obscure,
Lost to man's thought and eye, amid the trees
And unfrequented fields, on bended knees
Sueing for England's pardon, lives so pure
Mingle in heaven and God's approval share
With that uncloistered love, whose willing feet
Are borne through jeering crowd and gazing street
To scenes of lonely want and pining care.
For you the holy past is now unfurled,
That with its bright examples you may feed
The spirit of devotion. While the world
Honours your goodness with its hatred, you,
Still to your high and calm vocation true,
May win fresh light and strength from what you read.

F. W. Faber.

St. Wilfrid's,
Feast of our Lady of Redemption,
M.DCCC.XLVII.

PREFACE.

The following Life of S. Jane Frances de Chantal, foundress of the Order of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin, is translated from the French of the Reverend Mother de Chaugy, who was her niece and secretary for a period of nine years.

The Introduction is by the Abbé Boulangé.

London,
The Oratory
Feast of St. Patrick.

PREFACE OF M. DE CHAUGY.

In the presence of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, whose kind assistance I now implore, I protest that I have written nothing but the simple truth in the following pages, which I heard either from our Blessed Mother Jane Françoise de Chantal, and several others, especially our first Mothers, Marie Jacqueline Faber, Jeane Charlotte de Brechard, and Perronne Marie de Châtel, who commanded me to write these memoirs in 1636. From these memoirs I shall take the greater part of what I now intend saying; adding thereto what I afterwards heard, as well through my intimacy with our Blessed Mother, having had the grace of serving her as secular since 1632, as also what I learnt from our very honoured Mother Aimée de Blonay, one of her first daughters, and her last superior. Thus I commence this day of the holy Purification of our Lady, (February 2nd, 1642) in our first convent of Annecy. God be praised.

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TO THE

HONOURED MOTHERS AND SISTERS

OF THE

VISITATION OF ST. MARY.

My honoured Mothers and dear Sisters in Jesus Christ,

The book which I have the honour of presenting you, is yours; it belongs to you by all titles: and I thank you for the confidence you have placed in me, in communicating to me the precious manuscript. Deign to receive the offering of its publication, and of my poor labours. Any other but myself would have answered your expectations better, but no one could work with more zeal and affection. Besides, I knew you were deprived, for the most part, of these memorials, so deeply interesting to you: and I have hastened to satisfy your pious desires.

You will see with respectful admiration, the character of your holy Mother piously depicted by one of your sisters, the depositary of the secrets of her heart, and the witness of her little as of her great virtues: you will see the spirit of your holy Institute wonderfully described by the spirit of your illustrious Foundress. May the reading of this work inspire the very world itself, with those sweet and salutary thoughts, which, assisted by the grace of God, produce the

accomplishment of duties, daily virtues, and also generous sacrifices!

As for you, my honoured and dear sisters, you are happy, you belong to an Order, which has had, from the beginning, so many holy mothers and pious sisters! you enjoy the same spiritual advantages; you are, as they were, daughters of St. Jane Frances de Chantal. Such are your titles, and such are doubtless also, the powerful motives which cause you to aspire to the profound humility, the pure and tender charity of your holy Mother: virtues which are the basis of your Institute, and which are always recognized in the daughters of St. Francis de Sales.

May the Divine Heart of Jesus, your model and your refuge, may Mary, His holy Mother, and your august patroness, keep you in their love! This is the most ardent wish of him, who has the honour of calling himself, with the most sincere devotedness and profound respect, my honoured mothers, and dear sisters in Jesus Christ, your most obedient and humble servant,

The Abbé J. Boulangé,

Chaplain of the nuns of the Visitation of St. Mary at Mans.

INTRODUCTION.

The publication of the unedited Memoirs of the Life of S. Jane Frances de Chantal, collected by a nun, her niece, who asssisted her as secretary for nine years, naturally gives rise to the question, of what utility in the Church was the Institution of the Visitation to be? Perhaps also, in the world, after these Memoirs have been read, feelings of regret will be experienced, that a woman, so superior by her virtues, her firmness of character and her strong will, should have quitted her social position, her family, her children, her friends, the sick and poor whom she relieved, to found and embrace a religious life, quite hidden within the walls of a cloister.

To come to the point at once; if the Baroness de Chantal quitted the world, it was because she knew, that a vocation is something positive; it was because she understood that our Blessed Saviour has not only called all men to perfection, in saying, "Be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect;" but that He has also made a marked distinction in regard to some souls of whom He wishes to dispose without reserve. Has the world ever reflected on this distinction between the simple state of a Christian, and a much more elevated station, on that separation from friends, property, and self, in which consists the essence of a religious life? Never-

theless, was it not our Lord Himself, who established it? After saying to the young man of whom S. Matthew speaks, in the nineteeth chapter of his Gospel, that, in order to be saved, it suffices to keep the commandments, to fulfil the duties of justice towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves, did He not add, "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and then come and follow Me." That very day on which our Divine Legislator marks with so much precision, what is required for salvation, and what is also necessary for the acquisition of perfection, an instruction tending to the same end had proceeded from His sacred lips: some Pharisees having proposed to Him difficulties regarding the indissolubility of marriage, as we see in the beginning of the same chapter of S. Matthew, His disciples, terrified with the rigour of His answers, said to Him, "Lord, if the condition of a man, with regard to his wife be such, it is not good to marry!" This was at once confirmed by Incarnate Wisdom, without, however, imposing it as an obligation: "All do not understand this word, but only those who have the gift.....let him take it, who is able." Since that time every age has furnished some of these privileged souls; the Church, from her commencement, has seen faithful Christians of every age, sex, and condition, who have listened to the advice of their Master, who have followed it, who have placed in it their glory and their delight, and have even sealed it, when necessary, with their blood; there have also

been others, who have not accomplished it, though they respected it, and sanctified themselves in a different state. Since that time also, the special honours which the Church of Jesus Christ has at all times rendered to those whom she had consecrated to God in the religious state, have constantly verified this prophecy of Isaiah: "I will give them in my house, and within my walls, a good place, and a name, which shall be better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, which shall never perish."

S. Jane Frances was one of these chosen souls, destined to quit the world, to abandon friends, country, and whatever they hold most dear, even so far as to forget the place of their birth and their paternal home, in order to follow literally and fully, these oft-repeated words of our Blessed Saviour: "Let him who will come after Me, deny himself, take up his cross daily,—follow Me. For he who wishes to save his life, shall lose it, and he who shall lose his life, for the love of Me, shall save it.....he who doth not renounce whatever he hath, cannot be My disciple. He who loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me, and he who loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me."

Need we add, that the pious widow of the Baron de Chantal understood the advantages of "life in community," whilst she doubtless feared the dangers, the attacks, and the snares of a solitary life? In fact, what woman, however devoted she might be to the unremitting exercise of contemplative piety, or of active charity, would be ex-

empt from feeling her heart, her courage, her devotion fail, on certain days, when she is alone, or when the noise of the world disturbs her? What soul, however firm, can be without fear of those perfidious delusions, those evil temptations which upset our good will? Can there be a better means than example, to chase away that languor, the first, the most fertile, the most fatal of the wicked suggestions, with which the tempter so often attacks us, when we are seeking silence and retirement, or when we would practise works of self-devotion and charity?

The grace of God comes, it is true, to the help of those who seek it; it serves as a support to the exiles who are travelling through this vale of tears; it is not wanting to them in the mid-day heats; it strengthens them in the hour of combat. But what a powerful grace is there in association for those who know how to appreciate it! It carries them in its arms, as a mother carries her infant; it is always there, invisible and present, distributing to each one, the strength of all; an image of the Blessed Eucharist, the true Communion of Saints, it takes possession of every soul that gives itself to it. Being ever wakeful, it rouses love when it is slumbering; with its watchful care it re-invigorates charity when it is breaking down, while its constant heat rekindles fervour in prayer when it begins to grow cold. And then, union is the strength of prayer, for Christ has promised His merciful presence to those who shall meet together in His name, besides which, the community of good works, of

ardent zeal, of tender piety, of Christian mortification, and of all merits, forms a treasure from which we can constantly draw, without exhausting the source.

S. Jane Frances chose then, "the better part, which shall not be taken from her;" but she did not choose it for herself alone. Church history speaks of deaconesses, pious widows, who performed for women those offices which the deacons could not render them. Appointed to take care of those parts of the church, and of the places of assembly, exclusively reserved for women, according to the custom of the time, they took care also of the poor and sick of their own sex. The holy widow of whom we speak, by a pure motive of charity undertook also an evangelical mission, very similar to this; that of giving an admirable commencement, in a new Institute, to a succession of mutual services, and of acts of disinterestedness.

The world, it is true, complains that our Christian institutions depart from the order of society, the only one of which it will approve. It sees with displeasure the high enclosure of walls, which separates it from those who abandon it; it murmurs against the silence, the recollection that is sought in the cloister. In our days especially, there has been a movement against religious vows, which are not recognized by our laws. The world condemns whatever bears the stamp of duration, of permanence, of union: and without doubt the Baroness de Chantal has been blamed for having adopted these eternal bands, which are

the life of every religious association. However, let us listen to one of the most celebrated writers of our time: "Man," says M. de Chateaubriand, "is unhappy chiefly through his inconstancy. He fluctuates between opinion and opinion, between thought and thought; his affections have as little stability as his ideas, and his opinions alter like his feelings. This disquiet plunges him into misery, from which he cannot escape but by a superior strength, which attaches him to one object alone. We then see him bearing his chain with joy; for an unbelieving man nevertheless hates infidelity. Let us suppose that a religious might leave the cloister at her will.....We should constantly see the folly of the world enter convents through caprice, and quit them through the same motive. Troubled hearts would not be long enough in the society of peaceful minds to begin to share their tranquillity, and serene souls would soon lose their calmness by their intercourse with those who are disquieted. Meant as she is for solitude, the unfaithful spouse of Jesus Christ, would be fitted neither for solitude nor for the world: this ebb and flow of the passions, these vows made and broken by turns, would banish peace, subordination, and decorum from monasteries; these holy retreats would be no longer anything but places whither we should go to weep over the inconstancy of others, and to meditate new inconstancy ourselves."

But taking a more complete view of the religious life, is it not founded on the abnegation of self, the mortification of the senses, and the cruci-

fixion of nature? Now, for one who gives nothing to self-love, to the senses, nor to nature, what is there difficult in the vows? The most splendid fortune is nothing but an annoyance, when one does not wish to profit by the advantages it may procure; and the Christian in stripping himself of it is relieved. Would it be so, if the troublesome cares, the tricks of cupidity, the annoyance of business, entered even into solitude, to devour each moment as their prey, and even take possession of sleep? It is therefore a happiness for him to be poor; nor will it be less so to be obedient. Enclosed within those walls, amidst those duties which he has voluntarily embraced, what would independance avail, but to torment him, and produce nothing but useless agitation? Of all the sacrifices he makes to God, that of his will is perhaps the least painful; for if he has followed it in the world, he must know its fatigues and its dangers; and if, on the contrary, he has passed from the docility of childhood to that of the cloister, he will have the happiness to find in his life, when he looks it over in his mind at the hour of his death, none of those events which, decided upon and brought to maturity by our free-will, often produce during our whole lives an endless succession of faults, and sometimes of misfortunes. Then comes that superhuman virtue, that chastity of soul and body, of which religious persons contract the engagement, and which, doubtless, is observed much more easily by them, because their retirement protects them against many snares. Ordinary

Christians even, have so high an esteem for chastity, that they do not believe that any virtue can take root in the soul, if this do not make it fruitful. It is then with good and just reason that it is made the indispensable foundation of every solid and holy rule.

Besides, S. Jane Frances knew that, in binding herself by vows which became of strict obligation in the Institute of which she was the first mother, she was following literally our Blessed Saviour's counsels, and walking in His footsteps. Religious vows are, in fact, the habitual and constant practice of the maxims of the Gospel, and of the three virtues that have been the most eminently conspicuous in the life and mysteries of a Man-God. Do we not see there mortification, poverty, and obedience? And of what does the stable of Bethlehem remind us, if not of the infinite love with which the Infant God received those three dear companions who were to follow Him till His last breath? The Circumcision of Jesus, His flight into Egypt, His hidden life in the workshop of Joseph, His apostolic life, what do they show us, if not austere mortification, absolute poverty, and perfect obedience? And more than this: mortification and suffering, the symbols of the vows of chastity, were the natural consequences of the extreme poverty embraced by the Word Incarnate, which He Himself describes to us, when He says, "The foxes have their holes, and the birds of the air their nests, but the Son of man has not whereon to lay His head." As for obedience, who does not know these words

of our Blessed Saviour? "My food is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to fulfil His work. I always do those things that are pleasing to My Father." And if we read the history of His Passion: what is taught us by the tribunals of Annas, Caiphas, Pilate, and Herod, by the court of the Prætorium, the Cross, Calvary, the insults and mockeries of the soldiers, the gall, the vinegar, the sepulchre in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea; what do these things show us, if not obedience, poverty, and mortifications that have never been equalled? Jesus Christ expires in the anguish of the most bitter torments and the most cruel sufferings, verifying the prophecy of Isaiah: "That He was to be a man of sorrows, that He would be wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our sins." He dies in extreme poverty, after being stripped of His clothes, and He is placed in a borrowed sepulchre! He expires in an act of heroic obedience, no longer to His heavenly Father, no longer to Mary and Joseph, but to wicked judges, to cruel and infamous executioners! But the ardent love with which Jesus has loved us was not contented with giving us the example of His three dearest virtues till His last breath, He continues to practise them in an admirable manner in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar, where He offers Himself to His Father for us, as a victim of mortification, poverty, and obedience. Let us draw from this the following consequence: Since His love has resolved to prolong this state of immolation to the consummation of ages, it is just that the religious state should also

subsist to the end, with its holy vows, in order to be, as it were, the perpetual witness of the Church's gratitude for such a benefit, by reproducing in souls the mystical mortification, poverty, and obedience of the Son of God in the sacred tabernacles.

Granting these principles, if we are again asked, what is the use of religious institutions? of what advantage are vows which fetter liberty? we shall answer, of what use is the restoration of souls: what is the advantage of drawing near to the primitive state of glorious and pure humanity, to the future state of humanity, saved and impeccable? What is the use of restoring its brightness to the image of God, tarnished by orignal sin, and for this purpose, walking in the footsteps of the Son of the Eternal God Himself, who, in giving Himself to be our Saviour, offers Himself also to our imitation as our model? of what service are examples, that may detach souls from the illusions of the world, draw them towards heaven, and restore them to God? Were not these excellent Christians necessary to teach the world, that the obligations of a Christian life are far from being impossible, since, passing the bounds of indispensable obligation, men have embraced, through love, the rigours of perfection? A strange spectacle from the beginning, have been these wonderful virtues, which suddenly arose in the midst of a pagan world! Here was a living realization of the evangelical counsels and precepts; here was a solid foundation on which Christianity had cast

its anchor. It was plain that our Lord was drawing souls after Him towards the height of perfection, since a succession of examples proved it to the world. The world recognized, in the heroic practice of all these virtues, the stamp of the Divine hand, and these great things did not remain a barren spectacle. It understood the prodigy of vices destroyed, passions extinguished, weaknesses surmounted, wavering and feeble wills suddenly rendered immoveable and strong, indifferent and darkened minds suddenly enlightened, and inflamed with a passionate love of the truth. This movement was not made and followed merely by the stronger sex. At the same time, Christian virgins, weak in appearance but sustained by the faith, also retired far from the world. Whilst S. Paul was living alone in a cavern of Thebais, whilst S. Antony was torn from his retreat by the numerous admirers of his virtues, S. Syncletica, the daughter of a rich Macedonian family, left an orphan, and the richest heiress of Alexandria, was giving all her property to the poor, and seeking the desert with her blind sister, to consecrate there, the remainder of her life, to prayer and mortification. Afterwards, soon undeceived in her idea of living retired, she saw herself surrounded by a great number of widows and virgins, imploring with tears, the favour of being admitted into her neighbourhood. For a long time her humility would not allow her to accept the superiority, which they offered her, but, vanquished at last by their perseverance, she gave herself up entirely to her new duty, and even to this day

her teaching may be considered as a model of wisdom. Ever since her time, we have seen women join in all the generous undertakings, inspired by the spirit of Christianity. At the same period, the sister of S. Antony, at the head of a number of women and virgins, led the life of the Cenobites. Rather later, by the side of S. Pachomius, we find his sister founding a monastery: by the side of S. Basil, Macrina reproduces the rule, which he had given to his disciples; and S. Augustine, who had retired with some friends to a distance from Carthage, sees arise, not far from him, abodes filled with women, who, under the direction of his pious sister, dedicate themselves to retirement. With S. Benedict appears S. Scholastica; with S. Francis of Assisium, S. Clare; with S. Dominic, Guillemette de Fanjaux. In a word, no founder of an order, no benefactor of humanity, no pious imitator of Jesus Christ, has appeared in history, without our perceiving at the same time near him, a woman, pious, and devoted, strict in her morals, and austere in her life, and equally ready to make the same sacrifices, to endure the same sufferings, to obtain the same results. Amongst these privileged souls, we have already said, that one of the most illustrious of those who have answered the Divine call, was S. Jane Frances de Chantal. She was the first to found one of those congregations of young virgins and widows, who especially felt a yearning for solitude, repose, and mutual charity.

Until that time, fasting, lying on a hard bed,

and the maceration of the flesh, had always marked the first foundation of religious associations; the hair-shirt and the discipline seemed indispensable accompaniments to the religious life, and we are certainly far from condemning the use of them. It is only one form of the necessity of expiation by sacrifice. And do we not know, that the first blood shed after sin was that of the most just man then on earth? There would have been, in this first murder, as it were, an apparent injustice on the part of God, if we did not, on the contrary, discover in it an early and infinite mercy. Abel begins the work of Jesus Christ; here is expiation by blood, as soon as there is anything to expiate, and a vicarious expiation, since it is made by one who does not need it, and it becomes profitable when it is applied to others. Herein is contained the whole doctrine of penance. This principle of vicarious expiation has been recognized at all times, by all nations, as is proved by those offerings of blood, which have been introduced from the beginning on all altars, true and false. It is not, then, for us to attribute this unanimous belief, this universal practice, to superstition, since Jesus Christ has come Himself to explain, and consecrate it on Calvary, whence His blood has flowed on all the altars of the earth, to purify that which had been already shed, and to seal all the sacrifices offered to God.

The truth is, that with Christianity began a new religious era. But after our Saviour's death,

and the sacrifice of propitiation of the martyrs, the ancient priesthood, the priesthood of immolation, was transferred to those devoted expiators, to those austere religious, who, by the grace of of Jesus Christ and by His example, at once offered the sacrifice and were the victims. Hence proceed all the austerities of a penitential life. It is true that these austerities have no merit of themselves, but, united to the sufferings and to the merits of a Man-God, they are ennobled and sanctified even to our eyes, when we see the effect they produce, and discover, concealed in a body subdued by them, a soul, possessing in almost its entire integrity, that original purity which they have restored to her. And, certainly, the entire possession of our soul, and the fruition of God, who dwells in us, and from whom emanates everything that is noble in our sentiments, exalted in our hopes, and ineffable in our happiness, is well worthy of being purchased by a few sacrifices. The crown is rich, if the combat be painful: and the fervent Christian knows, that grace from on high always completes a work that it has inspired, and with which the courage of man has corresponded.

Nevertheless, that the austerity of life, required by most monastic rules, or practised by the saints, who have embraced them, is an exception to the common rule; and, if it be true, that it is the expiation of sin, and, as it were, the continuation of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, dead upon the cross to redeem us, it is equally certain that what God especially

calls for, is submission to the evils of this life, and the accomplishment of His law, as our Saviour has Himself given us an example; for we know that Jesus Christ has not been given to us by the Father, only "to be our wisdom, our justice, our sanctification, and our redemption," but, that we may find in Him the rule and example of our duties; He has also been given to us for a model, according to those words which may be justly applied to Him: "Look, and do according to the pattern which has been shown you:" and those which He spoke of Himself: "I have given you an example, that you may do as I have done." Now, to facilitate this sublime imitation, Jesus Christ has formed with us a holy and divine alliance, by means of which He is our Head, and we are His members; and as all the virtues are found in Him with an infinite perfection, they are to be reproduced in His mystical body, on account of the union contracted with Him, otherwise the members would be cut off from the head. But the degree of perfection, of which creatures are capable, being so limited, and the human soul, not having sufficient capacity to embrace together and with equal energy, the practice of all the virtues represented in the life of the Man-God, the Divine Spirit which animates His mystical body, has, as it were, divided these virtues amongst the elect. Some are called to honour and imitate His apostolic labours for the salvation of their brethren; others are depositaries of His power to rule the Church; others, of His justice to punish the guilty and keep up

the observance of laws. While some imitate His penitential and suffering life, others copy His contemplation, and the anguish of His Heart, in order to obtain the conversion of erring souls: some practise in various ways His mercy towards the unhappy; others participate in His love for innocence: in a word, there is not a virtue of Jesus Christ that has not been honoured and imitated in His Church. To convince ourselves of this, we have only to open the records of Christianity, wherein are consigned the memorable actions of those heroes, whom we honour with the worship of Dulia; we see them all distinguishing themselves by the practice of our Saviour's virtues, from which each one has chosen that which was to be especially the object of his most generous efforts. Hence is derived that admirable variety, which the Psalmist admires in the mantle of glory of the Spouse of Jesus Christ. "The Queen," he cries, "stood at thy right hand, clothed in a garment of gold, surrounded with variety."

If we observe this conduct of the vivifying Spirit in the universal body of the Church, we perceive it much more readily in religious orders, where we see that each founder has proposed to himself to copy one of the sublime virtues of the Saviour of men. Thus, S. Pachomius, S. Antony and their disciples, sanctified themselves by contemplation and contempt of the world: S. Benedict, Patriarch of the Monks in the West, shone by his zeal for perfection, by his mortification, his love for solitude and labour: S. Bruno

took for the leading idea of his order contemplation in the wilderness: S. Dominic placed his rule on the duty of preaching and of poverty; while that of S. Francis of Assisium is founded on necessitous poverty and evangelical simplicity: S. Ignatius of Loyola has given for a motto to his society, "The greater glory of God, and the salvation of souls:" S. Theresa established her reform on contemplation, and the mortification of the senses: S. John* of God, S. Camillus† of Lellis, S. Vincent‡ of Paul, have principally had in view, works of corporal mercy, the relief and sanctification of the suffering members of Jesus Christ. This great diversity of holy institutions, which is the glory and the distinctive characteristic of the Catholic Church, is well adapted to show us the merciful goodness of Him who governs it; since it gives to all souls, called to follow the evangelical counsels, so great a facility in following the inward leading that prompts them to prefer the practice of some particular mode of life, and to act, so to speak, in accordance with their dearest inclinations.

But what place does the Visitation hold in the hierarchy of religious orders? What is the spirit of the Institute, founded by S. Jane Frances de Chantal, in concert with the holy Bishop of Geneva? Here we will allow S. Frances of Sales to speak for himself.

"All congregations," says he, in his Spiritual

* He established at Granada the Brothers of Charity.

† He established at Rome Regular Clerks servants of the sick.

‡ Established at Paris the Sisters of Charity.

Conversations, "and all devout associations, have a spirit which is common to all, and each also has one peculiar to itself. That which is general, is the aim which they all have, of aspiring to the perfection of charity; but the particular spirit is the means chosen for attaining to the perfection of charity, that is to say, to the union of our soul with God, and with our neighbours for the love of God. The general means of effecting this union with God, proceeds from the conformity of our will to His, while union with our neighbour is meekness, which is a virtue immediately depending on charity. Let us now examine this particular spirit; it is, certainly, very different in various orders. Some unite themselves with God and their neighbours by contemplation, and for this purpose live in very great solitude, and converse as little as possible with the world, and not even with each other, except at certain times; they also unite themselves with their neighbour, by means of prayer, interceding for them with Almighty God. On the contrary, the spirit of others is equally to unite themselves with God and their neighbour, but it is by means of an active life, though spiritual; they unite themselves to God, but it is by drawing others to Him, by study, preaching, confessions, conferences, and other works of piety, and to succeed better with their neighbour in this, they mix with the world, they also unite themselves to God by prayer, but their chief end is, what we have already said, to try to convert souls and unite them to God.

Others have a severe and rigorous spirit, with a perfect contempt of the world and all its vanities and sensualities, desiring, by their example, to lead men to this contempt of all earthly things; and to this intention, tend the austerity of their clothing and exercises. Others have another spirit, and it is very necessary to know what is the particular spirit of each religious order and pious assembly."

Now, to come to the end for which our Congregation of the Visitation has been formed, and by this means, more easily to ascertain what is the particular spirit of the Visitation, I have already considered it to be a spirit of profound humility towards Almighty God, and of great sweetness towards our neighbour, for as there is less rigour for the body, there must be so much more meekness of heart. All the ancient fathers have agreed, that where the severity of corporal mortification is wanting, it must be made up by more perfection of heart. Humility towards God, meekness towards your neighbour, must therefore supply in your houses for the austerities of others. And though, indeed, austerities are good in themselves, and are means for attaining perfection, they would not be good in you, because they would be contrary to the rule. The spirit of meekness is so completely the spirit of the Visitation, that whoever should seek to introduce therein more austerities than there are at present, would at once destroy the Visitation; inasmuch as this would be to act against the intention for which it has been formed, which is to

receive sickly girls and women who have not sufficient bodily strength, or who are not inspired to serve God and unite themselves to Him by the means of the austerities practised in other orders.

In the book, entitled "The Interior Spirit of the Religious of the Visitation," explained by S. Francis of Sales, the holy Bishop adds, speaking of these pious nuns: "They are living holocausts, oblations, and precious victims of a perpetual sacrifice offered to God on the altar of Calvary, to serve without intermission Jesus Christ crucified, their only Spouse. They participate in the spirit of His cross, they enter into the holy dispositions of His martyrdom, in order to learn to crucify themselves at all times; they renounce every movement of their hearts which does not lead them to love Him, they employ their tongues solely in praising Him, they make use of their thoughts but to adore Him and admire His greatness. Their hands are only occupied in gathering at the foot of the cross the little virtues of humility, meekness, and simplicity, that grow there, and which are sprinkled with the blood of their Beloved, fixed as He is within their hearts as with nails on the cross; their understanding works only to learn and comprehend the sense of this divine lesson, to renounce oneself, to carry the cross, to follow a crucified Saviour in neglect, privations, insult, ignominy, agony, and all His other sufferings, and also to enter into the practice of those lovely virtues, of holy indifference, tranquillity, evenness of mind, obedience, poverty, charity,

which are comprised in the great lesson given on Calvary."

Meekness and charity, patience and the edification of others, prayer and mortification, holy resignation, simplicity, and humility of life; such then are the object of the Institute of the Visitation. The idea is beautiful, it has always been faithfully carried out. It is not a mere promise; it is a matter of history.

Besides, it it easy to perceive, that if the holy founder of the Visitation softened as much as possible the exterior austerities of the religious life, he did not on that account omit the sword of evangelical mortification; and if he spared the body, he aimed more completely at the sacrifice of the interior. For this end he inculcated to his daughters a strong and courageous devotion, which was to render them faithful, through love, to the smallest observances.

"We must believe," he said, "that in proportion as divine love shall increase in the souls of the daughters of the congregation, it will make them constantly more exact and careful in the observance of their constitutions, though, of themselves, they do not bind either under mortal or venial sin. If they obliged under pain of death, how strictly would they be observed! Now, "love is strong as death;" the attractions of love are therefore as powerful to make us execute a resolution, as the danger of death. "Zeal," says the sacred Canticle, "is hard and firm as hell;" souls, therefore, who possess zeal, will do as much and more through this virtue, than they

would by the fear of hell; so that the daughters of the Congregation, by the sweet force of love, will, with God's help, observe as strictly their rules as if they were binding under pain of eternal damnation.

"Let the sisters make particular profession of cherishing in their hearts, a deep, strong, and generous devotion. I say deep, so that their will may be all thrown into the good exterior actions they shall perform, whether small or great, that nothing may be done through custom, but by choice and application of the will; and if sometimes the external action precede the interior affections, in consequence of the habit, let the affection at least follow upon it closely.

"The daughters of the Congregation have very few rules for their exterior, few austerities, few ceremonies, few offices; let them, then, willingly and cheerfully accustom their hearts to them, making their exterior act from the interior, and nourishing the interior by the exterior; for thus, fire makes ashes, and the ashes keep the fire alive."

What an admirable compensation for corporal austerities! What detachment from self! What a close view of God! What simplicity of will! What holy ardour! What an amiable rule! Let us, however, listen to S. Francis of Sales: "Their devotion must be strong, first, in supporting temptations, which are never wanting to those who desire to give themselves to God. Secondly, strong in bearing the diversity of characters which will be found in the Congregation, which is as great a

practice of virtue for weak minds as can be met with. Thirdly, strong in bearing each her own imperfections, without being troubled at seeing herself subject to them. For, as it requires a strong humility not to lose courage, but to raise our confidence amidst our weaknesses, so a strong courage is necessary to undertake their perfect correction and amendment. Fourthly, strong in fighting against imperfections. Fifthly, strong in despising the words and judgments of the world, which never fails to oppose pious institutions, especially in the beginning. Sixthly, strong in keeping oneself free from affections, friendships, or particular inclinations, in order not to live according to these, but according to the light of true piety. Seventhly, strong in keeping oneself detached from the tenderness, sweetness, and consolation that proceed either from God or from creatures, that we may not be entangled by them. Eighthly, strong in undertaking a perpetual warfare against our evil inclinations, habits, humours, and propensities.

"Finally, it must be generous, so as not to be astonished at difficulties, but on the contrary to feel its courage rise under them; for as S. Bernard says, he is not very valiant whose courage does not augment under pains and contradictions. Generous it must be, aiming at the highest point of Christian perfection, notwithstanding all present imperfections and weaknesses, leaning with perfect confidence on the Divine mercy, after the example of her who said to her Beloved, 'Draw me; we will run after thee, in the odour of thy perfumes;' as if she would have said: 'Of myself, I am im-

moveable; but when thou shalt draw me, I shall run.' The Divine Lover of our souls often leaves us, as it were, entangled in our miseries, that we may know that our deliverance comes from Him, and that when it comes, we may hold it dear, as a precious gift of His goodness.

"This generous devotion despises nothing, and thus it is that each one, without trouble or disquiet, walks, runs, or flies, according to the diversity of inspirations, and the different degrees of Divine grace imparted to each."

Nothing can be added to the humility, the generous devotion, and perfect love with which the holy Founder desired to inspire his pious daughters, but his heart overflows when He teaches them the charity they are to practise towards one another: "'This is My commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you.' These, my dear daughters, are the sacred words of Him whom you have taken for your perfect model, the Saviour of the world, by which He invites you to labour to acquire the perfect love of your neighbour, regarding him as the master-piece of God, and His living image; she who shall prevent her neighbour in sweetness and in services, will be the most faithful follower of Jesus Christ.

"The greatest sacrifice you can make, my dear daughters, is to have, not only a solid charity, in loving your neighbour, but a tender, sweet, and loving affection, in order to embrace those persons for whom nature gives you most aversion.

"Comfort the sick, the sullen, and those who seem the most ill-tempered: excuse their defects

as much as possible, in the spirit of perfect charity; and remember that infirmities are schools of true charity for those who serve the feeble, while they are schools of loving patience for those who are suffering trouble and affliction. The first stand at the foot of the cross with our Lady, whose compassion they copy, the others are fixed to the cross with our Lord, Whose Passion they imitate.

"This charity should make you love your neighbour as yourselves, not with a sensual, natural, or interested love, but with a pure and unchanging love: for when the affection you bear your neighbour proceeds from the senses, it will have neither goodness nor beauty; but when it is founded on God, it will possess its true value: you must therefore let it spread and take root in your hearts as much as may be, for it will be excellent, because it comes from God, excellent, because it tends to God, excellent, because its bond of union is God, excellent, because it will last eternally in God."

The spirit which S. Francis de Sales gave to his dear Visitation was too eminently Christian, not to have admirers from the beginning. Many great servants of God congratulated the holy founder upon it. Dom Sens de Ste. Catherine, General of the Feuillants, wrote to him as follows;—

"It is said, my Lord, that your Congregation is the perfection of this world; and as for me, when I reflect upon it, I see it as exalted in love, as you have made it deep in humility. I hope that France, jealous of the prosperity of your mountains, will soon desire to share their happi-

ness. When you have made a mission in our part of the world, it will be sowing Madame de Chantal like a seed in our plains, which will bear fruit a hundred-fold. May God make me worthy to see this good seed scattered over our land; I pray God to give increase to it!".....The Revd. Father Binet, Provincial of the Jesuits, said to him, "My Lord, I praise God, that after cultivating your little earthly paradise, you have condescended to transplant its root and some of its branches in France, where they already yield an odour of piety and devotion, that will rekindle fervour in souls." The General of the Carthusians, passing through Lyons, wrote as follows: "My Lord, after kissing your holy and illustrious Lordship's hands, I cannot help telling you, that in passing through Lyons, weak as I am, I have, like another Sampson, tasted, honoured, and praised the sweetness, mildness, and piety of the establishment, and of the honey of your beloved bees, who have made their first settlement in that famous town, where they are so highly and surprisingly esteemed. I praise God for it, my Lord, and I bless Him, that He has performed through you and the worthy Baroness of Chantal, a work so holy and so worthy of the hand, of the trouble, and of the labour of the saints."...

It will perhaps be objected, that the daughters of the Visitation are not what they were when these letters were written; and one might be tempted to regret that they had not continued to attend the sick at their homes, as they were at first intended to do. We however answer, that

this Institute has been much more useful to the Church, perhaps, than it would have been, according to the first idea of the founder. The reception of "the weak, the blind, and the deformed" was substituted for visiting the sick. Let us here call to mind, that at the commencement of the seventeenth century the Church contained no orders but those from which the sick and weak were excluded, "and therefore obliged," says S. Francis de Sales, "to remain in the noise of the world, exposed to continual occasions of sin, or of losing the fervour of devotion. In this certainly they were worthy of great compassion; for who would not pity a generous soul, which, having an extreme desire to retire from the tumults of the world, to live to God alone, cannot accomplish it, not having a body sufficiently strong, a constitution good enough, or an age of sufficient vigour." Happy retreat, then, which was to be opened for "generous hearts, for healthy and robust minds," but for weakened bodies, and how many were to require it! What thousands of women have sanctified themselves under the shadow of this Institute, who could not have entered religion anywhere else!

When the Cardinal of Marquemont, Archbishop of Lyons, proposed this change, S. Francis de Sales, who had nothing in view but the greater glory of God, willingly adopted what was likely to conduce to this end most perfectly. He wrote as follows to Mother Marie Jacqueline Favre, then superioress of the first monastery of the Visitation of S. Mary of Lyons:

"If his Lordship the Archbishop tells you what he has said to me, you will answer him, that you have been left there for the establishment of the congregation, as far as your poor powers reach; that you will try to guide the sisters according to the rules of the Congregation; that, if it should please God that it should change name, state, or condition, you will acquiesce in His Divine appointments, and will be satisfied with whatever manner God is served in the society where you now serve Him. In fact, my very dear daughter, we must have this spirit in our congregation, for it is the perfect and apostolic spirit; and if our society could be made useful in founding several other congregations of good servants of God, without establishing itself, it would be all the more agreeable to God, for it would be less subject to self-love. It is quite indifferent whether the good of the congregation be done in one way or in another, though I should have a special delight in the name of a simple congregation, where the charity and fear of the Spouse would be the cloister. I agree, then, that we make a formal religious order, reserving, however, the two points of tenderness for widows and afflicted ladies. But, my daughter, I speak to you in simplicity and confidence: I give this consent with mildness and tranquillity; and not only my will, but my judgment is quite willing to offer the respect it owes to that of this great prelate: for, my daughter, all at which I aim in this, is, that God may be glorified, and that His holy love may be more abundantly poured into the hearts of those

that shall be happy enough to consecrate themselves to God therein. Believe me, my dear daughter, I have a perfect love for our little congregation, but free from that anxiety, without which ordinary love does not usually exist; but mine, which is not ordinary, exists entirely, I assure you, without that, but with the perfect confidence I have in the grace of our Lord, that His sovereign goodness will do more for this little Institute than [men can imagine." What a touching revelation of the virtue, uprightness of intention, profound humility, and of the whole soul of the holy Bishop of Geneva!

We have said that the order of the Visitation had perhaps been more useful to the Church since the change, which the holy Founder himself consented to make, than it would have been in following its first destination; the reception of so many ailing persons, who meet there with a tender charity, whilst they at the same time enjoy the merit and the advantages of the religious life, would sufficiently prove it; but may we not add, that recollection and solitude were necessary for the daughters of this congregation to acquire and perfect the spirit of disinterestedness, that S. Francis of Sales endeavoured, above all things, to inculcate. This spirit, which he called apostolic, could not be solidly founded, but on abnegation and the most profound humility; this great man knew it well, and, therefore, laid it as a special obligation on his daughters, to perform all their actions under the influence of these two virtues. Let us hear him speak again:

we shall see with astonishment how far he carries the humility, the abnegation, which he prescribes for his rising order, and the consequences which he draws from it. "It is humility, my dear daughters, that forms religious discipline, that is the foundation of the spiritual edifice, and the infallible mark of the children of Jesus Christ. For this reason you must pay particular attention to it, performing all your actions in the spirit of a profound, sincere, and cordial humility. Walk, then, generously through these lowly valleys, gathering, at the foot of the cross, that love of humility, since God has had so high an esteem for it, that He quitted, for a time, the exercise of His royalty, annihilating Himself even to the opprobrium of the cross, to teach us to practise the maxims of the apostolic spirit, and to teach you those of your institute, which lay down, that if you could be useful to God, by labouring at any other work whatsoever, and even at founding other congregations of servants of God, without ever establishing yourselves, you would be only thereby more agreeable to His Divine Majesty, practising by this means humility in the highest degree: and God, seeing in your heart this loving inclination for abjection, would, without doubt, establish and exalt you highly in the way of life, to which He has called you.....

"My dear daughters, God calls you to an entire abnegation and renunciation of yourselves, that without distinction of places, nations, or provinces, you may labour merely for the propagation of His glory, without any other interest but

that of pleasing Him; for it ought not to suffice to you to serve your neighbour, you must also allow yourselves to be employed for and by Him, in holy obedience; leaving God for God, and renouncing the consolations you might have in your monasteries, to serve Him in the labours and difficulties that absence may cause.

"Of what consequence is it to a truly loving soul, that his heavenly Spouse be served here or there, by this means, or by the other? He, who seeks only to please the Beloved, is satisfied with whatever pleases Him. The children of this world give up the company of their fathers and mothers and their own country, to submit themselves to husbands whom they do not know, or whose dispositions is unknown to them; and why should not the daughters of Almighty God possess greater courage, to go and cherish in these new hives swarms of bees, to employ themselves in Divine love, which is sweeter than honey, for the glory of their Spouse?

"The Apostles were sent over the whole world, to continue what the Saviour of the world had come to do, to give life to men, and not only life, but a 'better and more abundant life.' Thus, my dear daughters, are you destined, (as partaking of the apostolic spirit) to go hither and thither to various places, to give to many souls the knowledge of the perfection of the Gospel, as it is comprised in your institute; and though you cannot have the dignity of Apostles, on account of your sex, you have their office; for, without forgiving sins, are you not going to give life, and

a more abundant life, since we see so great a number of persons leaving the world by your example, who would have lost heaven by the dangers of the world and its vanities?

"If the consideration of your weakness troubles you, keep your eyes lifted up to God; increase your courage, cast into that bosom of infinite love all your apprehensions. He never employs souls in great or difficult works, without giving them each day knowledge and help, to accomplish them for His glory, if even He had to send an angel to guide them. Fear not, my daughters, go and undertake courageously whatever regards God's service. He will be at your right hand, that no difficulty may shake your courage; He will be your support, and will sustain you with His arm, that you may follow in His path. The Apostles were ignorant fishermen, God made them as learned as it was necessary for the charge He imposed upon them: thus He will bless you also in departing, in remaining, in serving Him, in serving your neighbour, in humbling you even to your own nothingness, and exalting you to God, who is your all."

These maxims are full of meaning; they are admirable, and capable of spreading a sweet perfume of sanctity. But what generosity does their practice require! Religious men find encouragement in the result of their labours; science lavishes abundantly upon them its delights and its exalted power. Docile instruments in their Master's hand, they yield divine sounds which are a pleasure even to themselves. They go forth to the combat,

they labour, they teach, they preach, they convert, their activity carries them on. In wiping the sweat from their brow they can count their victories. But, ordinarily, the sacrifice of religious women remains unknown; this sacrifice, then, seems to be more disinterested than that of men. Almighty God compensates to them, without doubt, by His graces, what He refuses in earthly consolation and support. We may say, however, that at certain periods, the daughters of the Visitation manifested exteriorly the apostolic spirit which S. Francis de Sales had in view. When occasion offered, they did not forget the instructions of their holy founder. They have always exerted themselves with indefatigable ardour for the success of the works, or the different missions that have been entrusted to them; and how many houses have had to rejoice in their consecration of themselves! What fruits has not the Church gathered? The direction of penitents, of hospitals, the care of orphans, the reform or government of monasteries, the establishment of new congregations, the education of youth, nothing has been foreign to their zeal. Always ready to serve the successors of the apostles, whom they acknowledge as their first superiors; they embrace, in obedience to them, all the missions of charity suitable to their sex; and from S. Jane Frances de Chantal down to our days, they have seemed fitted for all the works of mercy, spiritual and temporal.

It is known that S. Francis de Sales laboured, during his life, to re-establish religious discipline

in several monasteries, both of men and women. One day he was requested by the abbot of Citeaux to employ his authority to reform one of his abbeys, which had fallen into deplorable relaxation, but the nuns showed such obstinacy, that the saint was obliged to give up the attempt. At last, several years later, they received the reform and two nuns of the Visitation were charged with the care of confirming it. S. Jane Frances herself had the consolation of making regular observance flourish again in several monasteries; amongst others, in the abbey of Maubuisson, of the order of Citeaux; in a monastery of Benedictines at Orleans; and in the famous abbey of Notre Dame du Tart. Many other religious houses had felt the influence of the infected air, which, penetrating into cloisters at this period, vitiated everywhere the sources of monastic life. Some called to their help the first mothers of the Visitation. They always fulfilled this duty of charity with alacrity, and generally with success, notwithstanding the difficulties.

This is not all: the daughters of the Visitation have been also employed in the most varied functions of charity and zeal. They were sought out, because their humble and hidden lives could not afford any subject for jealous suspicion, nor offer offence to pride. At Paris, several women, touched by grace, having been associated together, to expiate in retirement the disorders of their lives, had imposed on themselves a strict cloister, and led a very edifying life. In 1620, S. Francis de Sales preached in their chapel on the feast of

S. Mary Magdalene, and gave the religious habit to some of them. After that time the holy Bishop interested himself strongly in this work, and said, as if by a prophetic spirit: "This will one day be the work of my daughters." That day, marked by Divine Providence, came at last. John Francis de Gondy, first Archbishop of Paris, was desirous of placing some nuns at the head of this house: he conducted thither Mother Anne Marie Bolain, and four other sisters of the Visitation. The city of Paris soon resounded with praises and blessings bestowed on the new establishment, and the pious penitents, to the admiration of all, were soon fulfilling fervently the exercises of the cloistered life. S. Vincent of Paul and the Mother Bolain formed constitutions full of charity and wisdom; and at their request Urban VIII. raised this congregation to a religious order, under the name of the "Order of Magdalen." The daughters of S. Francis of Sales governed it with wonderful success for forty-two years.

In 1644, the venerable Father Eudes, founder of the Missioners of Jesus and Mary, conceived the thought of erecting a house at Caen, for the reception of penitent women; and wishing that the nuns who governed it should possess the spirit and the rules of those of the Visitation, he obtained the co-operation in this holy work of a mother and two sisters of the order. The rules and constitutions of the Visitation were adopted, excepting what it was necessary to add for the government of the penitents, and this new congregation was erected into a religious order by

Pope Alexander VII., under the title of Notre Dame de Charité."

Though we cannot enumerate all the benefits of the Visitation in our country, we cannot omit the high mission which the daughters of S. Francis of Sales accomplished in Paris in 1664, and later in 1686.

Lewis XIV. and Hardouin Péréfix de Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris, had chosen Mère Louise Eugénie de Fontaine, and five other nuns of the first order of the Visitation at Paris, to labour for the extirpation of Jansenism, in the celebrated abbey of Port Royal. Mother de Fontaine was named superioress by commission. Her behaviour in so delicate an affair corresponded with the exalted confidence placed in her: her charity and prudence were never found wanting. Nevertheless, her exhortations and example could only win over a few of the nuns. The king, indignant at such obstinacy, divided the house, and caused the rebels to be transferred to the monastery of Port-Royal-des-Champs (1665). As he then desired, in concert with the Archbishop of Paris, to confer the title of abbess on Mother de la Fontaine, she, like a true daughter of S. Mary, addressed representations so humble, and entreaties so earnest to the prelate, that she persuaded him to change his intention; she did more, she obtained for the ladies of Port Royal the permission to choose their own abbess, who was afterwards to be named by the king. Soon after, Mother de Fontaine saw this house placed under the direction of a suitable abbess, the only nun of that community who had

not been infected with Jansenism, and she was enabled to return to her monastery after being absent sixteen months. She carried with her the esteem and regret of the abbess and the ladies of Port Royal, who showed her afterwards on all occasions the deepest gratitude for all she had done towards their reconciliation.

The royal house of S. Cyr, where three hundred noble young ladies were to be educated, had just been founded by Lewis XIV., at the request of Madame de Maintenon. But this great monarch being desirous of placing it under the care of a new congregation of nuns, called "les dames de S. Louis," wished that they should be first formed to a regular life, and to the evangelical virtues by the daughters of S. Francis of Sales. Mother Françoise Angélique Priolo was therefore called from the Visitation of Chaillot, with some of her sisters, and they governed S. Cyr a whole year. After their departure, Madame de Maintenon wrote to the Dames de S. Louis thus: "Do not think as much, my dear daughters, of regretting your mothers, as of profiting well of all they have said and done at S. Cyr. I shall be completely happy if I see you filled with the spirit of those dear daughters of the great S. Francis of Sales. Nothing better, most assuredly, can be desired for you. The king speaks even more strongly than I."

Notwithstanding the diversity of the works in which the daughters of S. Francis of Sales have been employed, they have never forgotten that the spirit of mutual charity, of humility, of positive

love for abjection, and of inviolable fidelity to the least of their rules, is their principal, or rather their sole treasure: and it has only been by preserving and cultivating it, that they have rendered themselves worthy of this humble vocation, which obliges them to the highest perfection. Let us also mention here that the nuns of the Visitation have, besides all this, obeyed that voice of our Saviour which has said, "Teach all nations." They have devoted themselves to the interesting work of the education of youth. In 1615 there were children educated in the first monastery of the Visitation at Annecy, where we find that S. Jane Frances de Chantal gave that same year the little habit of the Institute, or the pupil's uniform, to Melle de la Chavane, aged ten years. The "Coutumier" of the order allows from four to six young ladies wearing this habit in each house, to be educated there, and lays down rules for them. We allow that S. Francis de Sales did not impose this duty on his daughters; he even says to a superioress, in one of his letters: "God has not chosen your institute for the education of little children, but for the perfection of women and young girls, who, at an age when they know what they are doing, are called thither." But the illustrious founder, having left them at liberty to employ themselves in this work, the greater part of the houses of this order have educated youth, and we know, that even in the time of S. Jane Frances, there were tolerably large schools. We see in the history of the Monastery of Turin, founded on the 21st of November, 1638, that S. Jane Frances received

there from the first beginning, several young pupils.

Mother Françoise Madeleine de Chaugy, wrote in 1664: "The greater number of our houses have boarders; the second at Annecy has generally twelve or fifteen; it is true their residence is apart. This is the case at Rumilly and Chambéry. Our holy prelate in founding the house at Turin, established this custom so firmly, that they have usually twenty or twenty-five. I do not certainly wish to make this a law, but, as our first mothers have done, to make use of the permission when necessary. This custom has always been kept up in the Institute of the Visitation, and in 1792 the pupils of the greater number of the houses only quitted them with the religious. Every one knows, that as soon as the daughters of S. Francis de Sales were allowed to re-enter their cloisters, children were almost at the same time confided to them.

It is true that the education imparted in their houses is simple and modest. Their first care is to form the soul. They understand well that social life does not consist merely in the distinction of a cultivated mind, or in the advantage of pleasing talents. They first establish virtue on the foundation of faith; they try to form their young pupils to a piety both solid and tender, enlightened and wise, which joins the proprieties of life with its duties. Then they endeavour to train the understanding in a way which shall not produce in families sad, cruel, and useless disputes; for those who confide their children to them, de-

sire especially that they should prepare them to be good Christian mothers, that they should form those under their charge to those simple and amiable habits, which make the charm and the happiness of domestic life. Nowhere will you find more tender care, solicitude more maternal, or more attention in cultivating good natural inclinations, and eradicating defects of character.

Though the education of youth is a work generally adopted by the Visitation, several houses of the Order are exclusively devoted to prayer and an interior life. We would say to those who might be tempted to murmur against this life, which to them seems useless, "Your sisters are praying for you: forgive them, then, the solitude in which they conceal themselves, the silence which surrounds them, the mortifications which they perform daily for you. Almighty God, looking down upon the world, often pardons it for the sake of these pious daughters, collected in His name, whose holy prayers and moving actions are constantly interceding with Him. He loves to have His justice disarmed! He loves to see pure hearts asking conversion and pardon for criminal hearts! Woe to those societies where there is no prayer, and which do not pay to Jesus Christ their due share of ascetical virtues, holy meditations, austerities, and recollection! Has this difference in the Congregation founded by the holy Bishop of Geneva, ever injured the union, which is so desirable, between the different houses that form a part of it? It certainly has not: no religious order gives a more

striking example of mutual charity and cordial intercourse. To facilitate and keep up this pleasing union, each house should, every year, send the others its Circular Letter; they add also the lives of the sisters that have died during the year. Thus, they rejoice together in their spiritual and temporal advantages; thus, they console each other in their misfortunes and sorrows, whilst they at the same time find, in the example of the sisters that have died happily, new motives for thanksgiving and for perseverance.

The mutual tender affection of the daughters of S. Francis de Sales was so true, and the intercourse between the houses so intimate, at the time of S. Jane Frances, that she gave the following testimony to it: "I do not know or believe that there are any other kind of nuns, though under the authority of one single head, that possess a more entire conformity than I have seen existing in our monasteries, or that enjoy a sweeter or more perfect union than God has therein established, or a greater sweetness and confidingness than that which is witnessed in our intercourse, or a more prompt and charitable succour than that which we render in our necessities, each one according to her capacity."

This sweet union, and also the most perfect uniformity in rules, customs, clothing, and an amiable benevolence, with a simple and ordinary life, have been preserved in nearly two hundred houses of the Visitation even to our times. The apostolic men, who go to preach to idolaters, relate

with admiration that they always find the nuns of this Institute the same everywhere: and that those they have met with on Mount Libanus, in Russia, and in the New World, differ in nothing from those they have seen in Savoy, Italy, Spain, England, and France. Holy Society, amiable Congregation, pious Institute, venerable Order of the Visitation, I dare almost say,* "the most illustrious portion of the flock of Jesus Christ," how dear art thou to the Church! Amidst so many scandals that arise everywhere in the world, it is my joy and consolation to think of your widespread society, of the pure love which unites you, of the abundant effusion of God's grace, which makes you not only despise a carnal union, but choose a life in community, a holy society, which gives you one heart and one soul in God. At the sight of these advantages which you possess, and which God has given you, my heart feels some repose amidst the storms with which it is agitated by the evils I witness elsewhere." Thus spoke the great S. Augustine to the nuns of the monastery founded by his care at Hippo, the cradle of all the Augustinian communities. How often might S. Francis de Sales have used the same language to his dear daughters at Annecy, the cradle of the Institute he had just founded; and after him so many pious Bishops who received them into their dioceses with zeal and affection, at the time when this Order was making such wonderful progress! Their worthy successors have partici-

* Illustrior portio gregis Christi.—S. Cyprian.

pated in these sentiments, and have seen them re-appear and increase rapidly, when, after the evil days of our country, it was allowable to follow a Christian life openly.

But does the world agree with them ?.....The world has no esteem for the hidden life, the profound humility, the death to self, which are found in the Visitation. The world cannot penetrate into the secrets and the wonders of true sanctity, so strange and so enigmatical does it appear ! It will perhaps say that a pious partiality deludes us ; but it appears to us that there is contained in this abnegation of every day and every moment, in this mortification of all the faculties of the soul and body, in this total renunciation of self, in this continual application to God, a high and admirable perfection. Is it not by these means that the daughters of S. Francis de Sales arrive at their entire conformity of will with the Divine will, realising these words of their holy founder, "The will of God in them." They are well named "daughters of the Visitation of S. Mary," and Mary is truly their model, for they have embraced a life of which this august Virgin offered an admirable type : a life simple and ordinary in appearance, but a life of pure love and of holy resignation ! By their mutual charity they represent the mystery under the auspices of which they have been placed.

We cannot finish this rapid sketch of the Order of the Visitation of S. Mary, without speaking of the privilege it has enjoyed, of being chosen to propagate in the Church the devotion to the Sa-

cred Heart of Jesus. "This devotion," said the venerable Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque,* "is like a beautiful tree that seeks to take root in our Institute, to extend its branches to all the houses that compose it, that each may gather fruit from it at will, according to the measure of its taste, some more, some less. Its own share will be meted out to each in proportion to its labour..... But the Divine Heart desires that the daughters of the Visitation should distribute the fruits of this holy tree to all who wish for them, without fearing that they should fail."†

It is very remarkable that S. Francis de Sales had foretold this extraordinary favour. "The nuns of the Visitation," he says, "who shall be so happy as to observe their rules faithfully, may truly bear the name of children of the Gospel, established in this latter age, to be the imitators of the Sacred Heart of the Incarnate Word, in

* Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque was born July 22nd, 1647, at Lanthecourt, in the department of Sarne and Loire. God prevented her from her cradle with the benedictions of His sweetness, but He tried her from her early youth by very painful crosses. She entered the Convent of the Visitation of S. Mary, at Paray le Monial. Her life from that time was a continual practice of the sublimest virtues, which the Spouse of Virgins rewarded by the most remarkable favours. To the visions and revelations with which He honoured her, the Church owes the sweet devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which has made such progress in France, and in all Catholic countries. Sister Margaret Mary ended with the death of the just, her short career, Oct. 17, 1690. The numerous miracles wrought at her tomb, and by her intercession, caused her to be declared Venerable by the public voice, and the process of her beatification is now being solicited for in Rome. The house which witnessed her heroic virtues is preserved. There repose her precious remains. Her life, written by Jean Joseph Languet, Bishop of Soissons, has been reprinted at Avignon, in two vols.

† Life of the Venerable, &c.

sweetness and humility, which are, as it were, the foundation and basis of their order, and give them the privilege and incomparable favour of being the daughters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus." He adds, that "if the sisters of this congregation are very humble and faithful to God, they will have the Heart of Jesus, their crucified Spouse, for abode in this world, and His heavenly palace will be their eternal dwelling."*

Furthermore, the prophetic spirit of the holy Bishop of Geneva, seeing in futurity the graces reserved for his order, as if they had already come to pass, gave for emblem to his Institute, a heart surrounded with a crown of thorns, pierced with two arrows, and surmounted by a cross; in the middle of the heart are engraved the names of Jesus and Mary. It was almost under this form that the venerable Sister Margaret Mary saw the Divine Heart. "There was," said she, "a crown of thorns round this Sacred Heart, and a cross above, which seemed to be planted therein.' Now, we know that S. Francis de Sales died on the 28th of December, 1622, and that the lover of the Divine Heart of Jesus only came into the world on the 22nd of July, 1647, and entered the monastery of the Visitation at Paray-le-Monial on the 23rd of May, 1671, forty-nine years after the holy founder's death. It is, without doubt, to a special devotion to the Divine Heart of Jesus that the order of the Visitation owes the precious advantage of having always kept up the spirit

* Interior life explained by S. Francis de Sales.

of its primitive fervour, and a perfect uniformity. It has never needed reform, because it has never become relaxed. In the days of persecution, it shared the common fate of all religious orders, but it had the glory of being eclipsed without losing in any degree, the purity of its light and such it has re-appeared above the horizon, when happier days were granted to the Church. Such may it appear in ages to come, even to the most distant generations. And why should we not say it? May the members of this pious Institute increase in number, and constantly multiply, in order that they may reproduce in long succession, the virtues, of charity, of abnegation, of humility, of devotion and of the love of God; holy virtues which protect the world!

[By the kindness of the Rev. the Superioress of the Visitation Convent at Westbury-on-Trym, the Editors have been furnished with the following very interesting document.]

VIVAT × JESUS.

Extract from the account of the Foundation of the Convent of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mother in England, first established at Acton House, Middlesex, on the 19th March, 1804, now at Westbury-on-Trym, Gloucestershire, 1852.

England, our beloved country, once the favoured land of Heaven, called the Dowry of Mary, and the Island of Saints, having unhappily abandoned its God and His holy Faith, was in its fallen condition the object of the compassionate charity and fervent zeal of the Great S. Francis of Sales; for being informed that king James I.

of England was delighted with his incomparable book, the "Introduction to a Devout Life," and having expressed a desire of seeing the author, the saint exclaimed, "Ah! who will give me the wings of a dove, and I will fly to the king; into that great island, formerly the country of saints, but now overwhelmed with the darkness of error. If the Duke of Savoy will permit me, I will arise and go to that great Nineveh; I will speak to the king, and will announce to him, with the hazard of my life, the word of the Lord." But he never could obtain the consent of the Duke, and these shores were never blessed with his holy presence; but he doubtless obtained that his daughters should erect a house of his order in this land, and reserved this good work for one of the dear daughters of the Blessed Virgin, a pious lady, the widow of Marmaduke Cuthbert Tunstall, Esq. of Wycliff Hall, Yorkshire. It is believed she entertained thoughts of establishing a convent of the order of the Visitation soon after she became a widow, before the year 1792, at which time she resided near London, leading a retired life. She had always had a special devotion to the two founders of the order, took their name at confirmation, and had laid aside a considerable sum of money for the good work; and her faithful attendant dying, left in the hands of her mistress a legacy for the same purpose. The agitations which about this time kept France and other countries in commotion, prevented Mrs. Tunstall from procuring religious persons from the continent for the foundation; she probably

had doubts also if she should find any inclined to join in her design in this country; but hearing that the two eldest daughters of Thomas Weld, Esq. of Lulworth Castle, having returned to England, after completing their education at a Franciscan convent at Bruges, and that the elder of the two made known her intention of becoming a nun, and it was conjectured that her sister Mary had the same inclination; Mrs. Tunstall promised herself entire success, could she have procured the concurrence of the daughters of a person as distinguished as Mr. Weld, for his support of Catholicity in this kingdom. She therefore applied to Lady Arundel, of Wardour Castle, her cousin, and the common friend of both parties, to propose to these young ladies her plan, and to invite them to unite with her in forming the foundation. The proposition was made to the elder sister only; she read the rules and constitutions of the order; but recommending the affair to God by prayer, she decided on returning to the convent where she had been educated; for as inevitably a considerable time must elapse before a new community could be formed, she felt she should have too long to wait for the happiness of being a spouse of Him who interiorly urged her to lose no time in giving herself entirely to His sacred service. She executed her pious design, made her profession, taking the name of S. Francis de Sales in religion, and after a short but fervent career, died in 1800, four years before the commencement of this establishment. Before she parted from her dear Sister Mary, (who se-

cretly desired to become a religious of the Visitation order) she informed her of Mrs. Tunstall's wish to erect a house in England, but though intended by Almighty God to be a chief support to the undertaking at a later period, she did not at that time see any possibility of its success, and for the present relinquished the idea of assisting Mrs. Tunstall, but not that of being a member of the order of Holy Mary. At length Mrs. Tunstall, about the year 1793, seeing no prospect of executing her pious project, followed the advice some persons gave her, of employing the greater part of the property destined for the foundation, in relieving the good priests and religious communities, who, on account of the French Revolution, were obliged to seek refuge in this country. We may here mention a little of what we know of this holy woman. Mrs. Tunstall was the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Markham, of Claxby, in Lincolnshire, persons of great virtue, and firmly attached to the holy Catholic religion, in which they steadily persevered, notwithstanding the penal laws, which in their time were in force: having no son, their two daughters, Mary and Catherine, were joint heiresses of their large property. Mr. Markham died when his children were young, but their mother took all possible care of their education, and for greater security of their religious principles took them on the continent, and placed them successfully in several convents, and with maternal solicitude always kept near them. Her first care was to have them firmly grounded in their holy faith, and this vir-

tue was most conspicuous in the excellent foundress of this house. She was gifted by Heaven with a noble and generous soul, a feeling and very affectionate heart, an enlightened mind, an excellent understanding, and possessed of those accomplishments which were proper for a young lady of her rank in life; but she was always more inclined to what was solid and serious, than what might be deemed attractive. Her younger sister became a religious of the order of S. Benedict; and when she herself embraced the marriage state, she was a model to Christian ladies. Her husband was a pious and excellent Catholic gentleman of good property, and descended from the ancient family of the Tunstalls of Thurland, in Lancashire, afterwards removed to Yorkshire. This worthy couple had no children, God destining this excellent woman to be the mother of many spiritual daughters. In her widowhood she carried her benevolent charity to all in distress to an heroic degree; she had always been distinguished for her charity, but for the poor refugees in the French Revolution she stripped herself of nearly all her jewels, much of her plate, and whatever valuable lace she had. One thing of great value still remained; it was a beautiful diamond ring, the gift of her late husband; this she prized exceedingly; but the distress of the suffering members of Jesus Christ drew it from her finger, and with a noble heart she parted with this also. Whilst she was thus practising charity in England, France was expelling the religious from their sacred and peaceful abodes, and many

of the convents of the order of the Visitation shared this sad fate; amongst others, the two houses of the Institute at Rouen. Now, some of the members of these convents found means to go to Lisbon, and were affectionately received by the community there. In the year 1802, the Rev. Father Forrester, of the Society of Jesus, accidently heard of these nuns, from a conversation he had with a French lady, whom he met in a stage coach; he was at the time Mrs. Tunstall's director, and knew her wish regarding the foundation; he therefore engaged the lady, whose sister was one of the above-named religious, to ascertain if, in case such a thing became possible as to found a house of their order in England, they would be willing to be the foundresses; the answer was favourable, of which he informed Mrs. Tunstall, who resumed her former wish, and determined to endeavour to obtain a convent of the Visitation in England, resolving to give up a part of her jointure for its support, since she had disposed of the money she first intended for it in other charities. She then applied to the vicar apostolic of the London district, (the Rt. Rev. Dr. John Douglas) for his approbation and concurrence in the design; this he most heartily gave, and wrote himself to the Cardinal Joseph Francis de Mendoça, Patriarch of Lisbon, to request his Eminence to permit three of the religious from Rouen to come to England, also to the Mother superior of the convent there, saying, as soon as he should receive their answers, he would write to say when a house would be fitted for their

reception, and point out means for their voyage to be made as little inconvenient as possible, for Mrs. Tunstall would furnish all expenses by sea and land. There remained one difficulty on the part of the nuns. The rule requires six religious for the commencement of a foundation, and there were only three French sisters capable of the undertaking; the superior (who was then Mother Françoise Chantal Alvarez,) made application to some who remained at Rouen, but their ecclesiastical superiors would not permit them to quit Rouen, hoping one day to re-establish their convents; there were some from that place who had fled to Saragosa in Spain, two of these being applied to, agreed to join those at Lisbon, and a third, Sister Marie de Sales Clastres, who was professed at Arles, but was then at Saragosa, made the sixth; this latter was intended at first for the superior; they went to Lisbon, and with their associates received their obedience from the Patriarch of Lisbon, who had taken the trouble to procure the permission of the Prince Regent, which was necessary for them, in order to leave the country, the convent of the Visitation being under the protection of the crown. The Rev. President of the English College at Lisbon, took charge, at the request of Dr. Douglas and Mrs. Tunstall, of providing all that was requisite for their voyage, and on the 14th of September, 1803, this little troop set sail for England, full of holy courage and confidence in God; their names were, Sister Louise Therèse Grandin, elected superior, Sister Therèse Chantal Hurard, assistant,

Sister Madeleine Angelique Heugue, Sister Thérèse Euphrasie Duval, Sister Joseph Emmanuel Ibarriola, Sister Marie de Sales Clastres. After five days' sail their vessel was pursued by a French privateer; the poor nuns were very much alarmed when they found the English captain was about to engage in a battle with the French vessel; they remained in their little cabin, and prepared for death; but the English captain found his force was not at all equal to the privateer, and seeing it unavoidable, surrendered. The French captain behaved well; and as our dear foundresses were all of the French nation, he was very civil to them, and they were not put in prison. The captured vessel was conducted to Vigo. As soon as they had landed, the three sisters who had come from Saragosa, declared to the others that they had not strength to support another voyage; that they authorized them to pursue their enterprise if they had sufficient courage; but as for themselves, they were so spent with sea-sickness, alarms, and other sufferings, that, adoring the dispositions of Divine Providence, which seemed to render them unable to proceed, (especially Sister Marie de Sales Clastres, for whose life they began to fear) they thought it was not the will of Heaven they should go farther, and after a few days' rest they returned to Saragosa. The other three, placing their entire confidence in Him for whom they commenced this good work, determined on going to Oporto, from whence they understood there was a convoy about to depart for England. At their arrival they found the convoy was gone, and

that there would be no opportunity of passing to England for three months. Not discouraged, they determined to wait that time, still confiding in God, who did not forget His faithful servants, and enabled them to find in the charitable Bishop of Aire, who had emigrated to Oporto on account of the revolution, all they could desire in such circumstances. He received them into his house, would allow them to have no table but his, said mass for them every day, and permitted them daily to approach Holy Communion, and encouraged them much to proceed in their enterprise, as also to write to Mrs. Tunstall, and inform her of their situation. She answered them in the kindest manner, earnestly pressing them not to relinquish the undertaking. At length a vessel was found bound for England, and they set sail with the holy Bishop's blessing. Sister Theresa Chantal Hurard was the life and encouragement of the rest, and she was the one, as it proved, that was to be the chief labourer in this work. She was a person of great energy and firmness of character, exact to her rule, and animated with the spirit of her holy founder. The merchant's ship on which they embarked was bound for Falmouth; they set sail about the beginning of January, 1804. They had a most stormy voyage, and were once in great danger of shipwreck, but the superior made a vow to receive a member without any fortune if they escaped their present peril. In twelve days they reached Falmouth, but found they could proceed no farther without passports, no foreigner being al-

lowed at that time to enter the country without them; but they being provided for them, they proceeded to a convent of Augustin nuns at Spetisbury, in Dorsetshire, where Mrs. Tunstall then resided, and was expecting them. She received them as angels from heaven, and they were most kindly and hospitably entertained by that holy community, and especially their excellent superior, Mother Stonor. They greatly desired to commence the foundation on the festival of the holy founder, the 29th of January, but the house was not ready for them, so they celebrated it with the good religious at Spetisbury that year. There was already a postulant for the rank of lay-sister; she was gone forward with Mrs. Tunstall's maid to prepare the house at Acton; it was about five miles from London; it had formerly belonged to Lord Derwentwater, who was put to death for his faith. This house had been arranged as near as possible to the plan of their convents in their custom book, which Mrs. Tunstall had procured, and it was an entire monastery in miniature, and furnished according to the written rules. When all things were prepared, the three religious foundresses, accompanied by Mrs. Tunstall, took leave of their hospitable friends at Spetisbury, and on the 17th arrived at their own little convent, intending to commence the foundation the next day, but the Bishop being prevented from attending, the ceremony was deferred till the glorious feast of the great S. Joseph, the 19th of March, 1804. But now there was a new difficulty. Mother Louise Thérèse Grandin, the mother superior, found

herself so exhausted in mind and body, that she requested the Bishop's permission to resign her charge; and the worthy Bishop seeing her inability, accepted her deposition, and Mother Thérèse de Chantal Hurard was elected in her place, and Sister Madeleine Angelique Heugue, assistant, a postulant for the choir presented herself the same day. Inclosure was also settled, which Mother Teresa Chantal insisted on being quite complete, with grates at the parlours and in the Church. For some time there were few who presented themselves for members of the new establishment. During the summer of 1804, Miss Weld paid them a visit, but she could not yet obtain the consent of her dear father to leave him; and though her heart was at the Visitation, she was obliged to return home without fixing any time when she would be able to join them.

When Mrs. Tunstall heard this, it seemed for a moment to cause her some perplexity, but after pausing some seconds, she joined her hands, and exclaimed, "I will go on with it!" After our Lord had tried them for a time, He began to fill the little dove-cote of Mary with chosen souls; three or four presented themselves the summer of that year, also another excellent lay-sister, and an out sister. And on the 13th of December, 1804, the long expected and valued Miss Weld took her departure from the world, separated herself from a family where she was esteemed and beloved, and joined the new community. She was truly welcome to all, especially to the good foundresses, who justly considered her as a funda-

mental stone in their rising edifice. She was clothed the January following, on the feast of S. Francis de Sales, and took his name, and professed the next year. At the end of six years she was elected superior, and the community was so increased as to require a larger house for their accommodation, as on examination their present one was found too old to admit of enlarging, or even building on the foundation. They resolved on purchasing one at Shepton-Mallet, but after some years this was found an unhealthy situation, on account of inundations which occasionally occurred; the community removed to Westbury on Trym, near Bristol, in the year 1831, where they still remain in 1852.

NOTICE

OF MOTHER FRANCOISE MADELEINE DE CHAUGY.

Mother Françoise Madeleine de Chaugy was born on the 1st of January, 1611. She speaks as follows of her family, in her answer to the apostolic commissaries, appointed to collect in 1658 the depositions for the canonization of S. Francis of Sales: "I was born in France, in the province of Bourbonnais, in the diocese of Autun, and I was baptised in the parish of Cusy. My father was Hugh de Chaugy, Baron of Cusy. I had the honour to have Madame Claudine de Toulonjon*

* Claudine de Toulonjon was sister to the Count of Toulonjon, who married a daughter of Madame de Chantal. Thus, Mother Françoise Madeleine de Chaugy was great niece by marriage to S. Jane Frances Fremiot. She was also, on the other side, related to S. Francis de Sales.

for my mother. God, who made them equal in birth, enabled them both also by His holy grace, to remain faithful children of our holy Church, and to lead Christian lives in the married state.

Mademoiselle de Chaugy received in baptism the names of Jaqueline-Philippine-Claudine. Madame de Toulonjon, her grandmother, had such an affection for her, that she begged to have her always with her, to form her young heart to virtue. God preserved her from several dangers in her childhood, by which some idea was conceived of the great designs His Divine Providence had over her.

This young lady early distinguished herself by the liveliness of her disposition, and the development of her intellect, as much as by the virtue and modesty which she showed in her whole conduct. She quickly understood what was taught her, retained it equally well, and delighted in teaching her little companions what she had herself learned. She made her first communion at ten years of age, with such lively sentiments of faith, and such sensible devotion, that she never forgot it.

Some time after, towards the end of the year 1622, this interesting child attracted the attention of the holy founder of the Visitation, who saw her at Moulins, at the house of the Maréchal de S. Gérans. It is known, that amongst the extraordinary gifts that shone in S. Francis de Sales, he possessed in an eminent degree that of prophecy; and that at the time he was planning his Institute, our Lord showed him the design of

it, and placed before his eyes, as in a mirror, not only those who were to be its foundation-stones, but all who were to sanctify themselves in this holy order. This illustrious prelate having been invited to dine with the Maréchal de S. Gérans, took an apple from the table when dessert came on, and offering it to Mdlle. de Chaugy, said to her, "I know that young people like sweet things," then he added, "You also will be one of ours." Mdlle. de Chaugy did not value much a prediction so consoling to the eyes of faith; the world had begun to please her, and she felt the advantages she had received from nature. She distinguished herself by extraordinary talents; she learned Latin with the greatest ease, and united to it all those branches of knowledge which form a part of the education of persons of her sex; she liked poetry, and succeeded extremely well in it. To her mental qualities she united those of the heart. She possessed a greatness of soul, a courage, a generosity and magnanimity, that were really extraordinary. None of those qualities which constitute what the world calls perfection, were wanting to her; she had a singular facility in pleasing and in gaining all hearts; but she was aware of it; her only defect was that secret pride which feeds on the thought of its own excellence, whilst it allows nothing to appear outwardly, but that tone of modesty which good breeding knows how to put on. At the age of sixteen or seventeen Mdlle. de Chaugy became strongly attached to a young nobleman, and the Baron de Cusy, finding this gentleman all he could desire, granted

him his daughter in marriage; but the Baroness de Cusy, having refused to consent to this alliance, and the Baron dying shortly after, Mdlle. de Chaugy resolved to retire to the monastery of the Visitation at Paray-le-Monial, with the sole motive of calming her disquiet, and withdrawing from the vigilance of a mother, who had always opposed her inclinations. Then, in solitude, she made serious reflections on the past, she began to comprehend the vanity of worldly amusements, and the little satisfaction drawn from them by those who are unhappy enough to be dazzled by their false splendour. But God reserved still greater mercies for her. Madame de Toulonjon, her aunt, having sent for her, she met there Madame de Chantal, who, travelling at that time in Burgundy, came to see her daughter Madame de Toulonjon.

Our Lord made known to the holy foundress His designs on Mdlle. de Chaugy, whose mind and talents might one day contribute to the advantage of a rising order. She persuaded her to open her heart, and showed her that in her situation nothing would be better for her than to quit her native province, since time was the great and only remedy for these afflictions. She added, if she would accompany her to Annecy, whither she was returning, she would receive her into her monastery, where she should live in perfect liberty; and that later, if such was the will of God, she herself would assist her in obtaining from her relations the object of her wishes. Mdlle. de Chaugy accepted this offer,

and arrived at Annecy on the 27th of October, 1726. To prevent weariness during her stay in the monastery of the Visitation, she amused her leisure hours with works of art; and as she had a brilliant imagination, and great facility in expressing her thoughts, she composed verses, spiritual canticles, and a Life of S. Bernard de Menthon. By degrees, however, grace took possession of her soul, showed her the dangers from which she had been withdrawn, and the excellence of the religious state; but her heart was still a captive; the world came before her with its seductive charms, and she could not resolve to abandon it. More than six months elapsed amidst irresolution and constant struggles. At last, some time after Easter, she determined to embrace a religious life. She made known her resolution to S. Chantal, who was filled with joy, and began to cultivate with the most attentive care this new plant of the garden of the Spouse, and to form her to all the virtues of the cloister, especially humility. The fervent novice profited so well by it, and mortified her self-love so carefully, that she became a prodigy of simplicity and modesty; so that in her heart, where in her youth pride had abounded, humility superabounded during the rest of her life. In May, 1629, Mdlle. de Chaugy was clothed in the holy habit by John Francis de Sales, brother and successor of the holy founder of the Visitation. She made her solemn profession on the 12th of July, 1630, and continued to walk with giant steps in the way of perfection, under the direction of S. Chantal herself.

We shall not follow Sister Françoise Madeleine de Chaugy in her religious career, which was long and varied; we will only say, that she was one of the noblest ornaments of the order of the Visitation, to which she rendered signal services, and of which, as superioress, she governed several houses at different times. The canonization of S. Francis de Sales, in which she took so active a part, the establishments she founded in different places, the writings she has left behind, are certain proofs of her ability, of the solidity of her mind, of her zeal for the good of her order, of her love for religious perfection.*

She died on the 6th of September, 1680, aged sixty-nine years and nine months. Her body was found eighteen months after her death, uncorrupt, flexible, and unchanged in colour, as were also her clothes and a crown of flowers on her head. The straw on which she was laid was in perfect preservation, and yielded a sweet perfume; nevertheless, there was found in the bier by her side, the body of another sister of great virtue, entirely consumed.

* Sister Frangoise Madeleine de Chaugy re-wrote the history of the monasteries of the Visitation which existed in her time; the Life of S. Chantal, an abridgment of the Life of S. Francis de Sales; Memoirs of Mother Maria Aimée de Blonay; the Lives of the first superioresses of the Visitation, and the journal, or Holy Year of the Visitation.

THE LIFE

OF

S. JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF THE REVD. MOTHER DE CHAUGY, HER NEICE AND SECRETARY.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE VIRTUE OF THE ANCESTORS AND FATHER OF OUR BLESSED MOTHER.

It is not for the purpose of boasting of things in which the world glories, that we intend making mention of the noble and virtuous ancestors of our Blessed Mother Jane Frances Frémiot de Chantal; yet it seems not unreasonable to trace the root of the tree, the excellent fruit of which we have tasted. Our Blessed Mother was descended from the noble race of Frémiot, and on her mother's side, from the illustrious house of Berbisy, much honoured for the space of three centuries in the province, occupying the first position, and being connected with all the good families in the duchy. Her paternal ancestors were the first founders of the august parlia-

ment of Dijon, a very ancient town, and capital of Burgundy, and one of the first illuminated with the sacred rays of the Catholic faith, through the instrumentality of S. Benignus. In this lovely city the predecessors of our Blessed Mother had been blessed from generation to generation; but not to go far into the matter, we shall only speak of her great-grandfather, and grand-father, who were Jean and René Frémiot, both holding high places in the parliament of Dijon. Her great-grandfather, an example of all virtue and justice, was called the father of the poor and the refuge of the afflicted; he lived to be seventy-three years of age, and left as his heir, as well of his property as his virtues, René Frémiot, the grandfather of our saint. He did all that was just in the sight of the Lord, not straying from the good way of his father. One of the greatest blessings he received from God, was to be father of Benigne and Claude Frémiot, the father and uncle of our Blessed Mother. This prudent man gave his children a good education, and as it was in his time that Luther and Calvin endeavoured to instil into the French the accursed poison of their pernicious doctrine, this good father was wont daily to collect his servants and children together, and to speak to them, as an antidote and preservative against that heresy which was slaying so many souls. Not content with this, he was wont to collect his friends together, and speak to them of the truth taught by the Roman Church; and thus God used him as an instrument to prevent the fall of many into heresy.

This faithful son of holy Church lived a good life till his seventy-fifth or seventy-sixth year, when the hour and day of his death were revealed to him.

On the eve of his departure, he took leave of his relatives and friends, telling them with holy simplicity, that he was about to take his eternal voyage. On the same day a very remarkable thing occurred; it was that this good old man being unable to walk, desired to mount his little mule when he went to take leave of his friends. The beast, as if he had known his master's necessities, extended his four limbs and bent himself till he almost touched the ground, and remained in this posture until the old man had settled himself in the saddle, when the animal gently arose, lifting up his feet one after another, and on his return home acted in the same way, in order that his good master might be able to dismount with greater ease. This was regarded by those who witnessed it as a miracle, and as a recompense which God bestowed on the holy old man for his perfect submission to the Roman Church; for irrational creatures, says a saint, become submissive to man, in proportion as reasonable man is submissive to God. Our pious and venerable old man on returning home, arranged that an ecclesiastic should say mass on the following day in a small chapel where he could assist, being in bed, and openly said that his life would be at an end before the priest had taken his last ablution. He spent the night very devoutly, although in much pain, and on the

arrival of the morning, he confessed, communicated, received Extreme Unction, besought him to commence his mass as soon as he could: "Inasmuch," said he, "as before you will have taken the ablution, I shall take the eternal nectar in the kingdom of my God." He heard this mass with admirable devotion, and as the priest elevated the chalice, this holy man, with a great celestial ardour, and angelic face, lifted up his eyes towards the eternal mountains, saying, in Latin, these words of the Psalmist: "Quando consolaberis me?" At the same time he breathed his last in the presence of all, who could only console themselves in the loss of so venerable a man, by seeing him live again in the persons of his children, and especially in that of Benigne Frémiot, the father of our Blessed Mother, who increased the glories of his illustrious house. The fruit of his holy education was visible in his youngest years. We shall only relate one anecdote.

He was a student at Bourges while the Calvinists were preaching with a hellish fury their falsehoods. This young man did not desire to go to the conventicle; but at last, persuaded by the importunity of his fellow pupils, he accompanied them, and on leaving said, "We have heard lies, and not sermons. Know, then, that the spirit of God is not in this man; instead of teaching the law of God, he declaims against mother church. He shall neither poison my heart nor my ears." Indeed, he never heard an heretical sermon after this, and prevented several of his fellow pupils

from going, by telling them, that instead of going to a sermon, they went to a school of hell, and that Lucifer was the master.

He returned to Dijon, and after having finished his studies, was received as an advocate-general, a duty which he exercised with such prudence and skill, that it was remarked that the judges always followed his advice; and afterwards his merit won for him the post of second president in the very august parliament of Dijon.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE BIRTH OF OUR BLESSED MOTHER, AND THE FIDELITY OF HER FATHER THE PRESIDENT FREMIOT TO THE CHURCH AND KING.

Though already connected so honourably, he became yet more so by his marriage with Mademoiselle Marguerite de Berbisy, a worthy companion of his virtue. God blessed them with three children, namely, Marguerite, Baroness d'Effrun, the mother of two brave warriors, who fell in the service of the king, and Monsignor de Chalons, who is now living, and enjoys the reputation of a good and virtuous prelate; the second daughter was Jane Frances, afterwards Baroness de Chantal, and our blessed foundress; and the youngest was André Frémiot, archbishop of Bourges, and patriarch of Aquitaine. As to our Blessed

Mother, S. John the almoner, who is even more charitable in heaven than he was here, seeing that the world had need of a "strong woman," as the holy Scriptures speak, obtained this gift from God for the earth, and our Blessed Mother was born on the 23rd of January, the day on which the church celebrates his feast. She came into the world in the city of Dijon, about seven or eight A. M. on a Tuesday, in 1572, to be a glorious ornament to it. Gregory XIII. of Bologna sat at that time in the Apostolic Chair, and the crown was worn by Charles IV. Our dear little saint was forthwith regenerated in the sacred waters of baptism, and called Jane, and at her confirmation Frances. She was only eighteen months old when she lost her mother; who died in child-bed after the birth of Mgr. André Frémiot, archbishop of Bourges; but the blessed orphan was brought up with as much care as she would have been had her mother's life been spared. Certain marks of Divine grace were observed in her at a very early age, especially a very majestic modesty, and a strong aversion to heretics, so strong, that if one of them wished to carry her or take her in his arms, she commenced crying, and did not cease until she was left alone. She learned everything that was taught her with very great quickness, and she was instructed in everything that was fit for a young lady in her position of life to learn, viz., to read, write, dance, play on instruments, sing to music, and work.

Let us, while she is there spending the earlier

years of her youth, consider the occupations of M. Frémiot. Charles IX. had scarcely attained his twenty-fifth year before death, with his unsparing scythe, deprived him of his sceptre and crown; he was succeeded by Henry III. who saw his kingdom in revolt a few months after his accession to the throne, through the plotting of certain princes and noblemen, who wished to deprive him of his crown, and to give him a cloister as a palace, and a monk's cowl for a collar. Burgundy was distinguished for her opposition to the sovereign, through the influence of her governor, who was father to one of the leaders of the rebels. Under this wicked commander Dijon, as Jerusalem in days of old while under the government of Herod, was troubled and almost destroyed by the blast of this tempest. The governor, who had won over to his cause the majority of the officers of the Parliament, left nothing undone to undermine the loyalty of the president Frémiot, but in vain; the president, on the contrary, perceiving that he could not do better, gained over about a dozen, consisting of counsellors, advocates, and the recorders of the Parliament, and deserting his house and children, led them to Flavigny and Sémur, "In order (said he) that there should be one place in this little province of Burgundy which would render justice in obedience to the king." Not satisfied with this, he won over to the cause of loyalty the *noblesse* of the environs, and from his own tenantry levied soldiers to maintain a campaign for the king's party. This was not done for a few months only, but during the whole of the

civil wars ; he was not in the slightest degree solicitous of impoverishing himself, and he inculcated upon those who were with him, that the greatest wealth of a politican and a soldier, was the glory of impoverishing himself to preserve his fidelity, and serve his country and his unfortunate sovereign. During the time of the League our faithful president had some severe attacks to sustain ; the chief of which was when his only son was made prisoner, and he was written to to say that unless he joined the rebels his son's head would be sent him as his reward. This great man, not in the slightest degree astonished, replied, that he would indeed be happy in sacrificing so dear a son to God in so noble a cause, and that it would be far better for the son to die innocent than for the father to inculpate himself by an act of treachery, sinning against God and his sovereign. His enemies, perceiving this, preferred fattening themselves with pistoles, to defiling them with the innocent blood of this young nobleman, whom his good father ransomed with a very large sum of money. The king, Henry III., fell during these troubles, which event caused great rejoicing among his enemies ; but the loyal president was so afflicted, that in one night his hair became perfectly grey. However, without giving way to the restlessness customary to those whose will is not in conformity to that of God, with perfect calmness of mind, he immediately sent dispatches to all the *noblesse* of the environs, levied fresh troops to guard Flavigny and Sémur, in order that as soon as Henry IV., to whom the crown

descended legitimately, had embraced the purity of the orthodox faith, and been anointed king, he might have a faithful band in this small corner of Burgundy.

After the consecration of this great king, and as soon as peace had been restored, the president Frémiot returned victorious to Dijon, without thinking or complaining of the loss and damage done to his property and house. Shortly after Henry IV. arrived at Dijon, while making the visit of his kingdom; he was exceedingly profuse in his kindness to the loyal President Frémiot, confirmed and authorised all that had been enacted by his little Parliament at Flavigny and Sémur, and at the same time declared everything that had been done during his absence from Dijon by the Parliament as null and void, adding, "M. Frémiot, you have so well discharged the duty of first president at Flavigny, that it is my desire that you should be first president here." This faithful and loyal subject replied: "Sire, God forbid that I should ever usurp the place of a living man; the first president is a good Catholic, and will serve you majesty faithfully." The king was enraptured with his great virtue; but, however, ordered that all the couriers should first alight at M. Frémiot's door, and that all the royal dispatches should be given him; but he was so chary of this favour, that he never opened a single dispatch unless in the presence of the first president, to whom he carried them as soon as they arrived. The king did not limit his favours to

this, but knowing that this faithful and loyal subject purposed, after having performed so many noble actions for his terrestrial prince, to dedicate himself for the remainder of his life to the service of the Prince of Heaven in the ecclesiastical state, his majesty gave him the archbishopric of Bourges, the great abbey of S. Etienne of Dijon, and the grant of the priory of Nantuaz.

Something happened about this time which showed forth in a yet more remarkable manner the piety of M. Frémiot. A certain member of the Parliament, who had been his chief persecutor during the League, (it was he who had placed a ransom on his son's head) was accused of treason. The king forthwith commanded him to be executed, and sending for M. Frémiot, who was in the next room, asked his advice. The courtiers, who were present, were amazed at hearing the good President advocate the cause of his enemy, and that so eloquently, that this great king, aware of all that the accused had done against M. Frémiot, shrugged his shoulders, and replied: "I see that my royal clemency must unite itself with your generosity; you deserve the life of your enemy. I give it you."

Another circumstance, pleasanter than the former, happened about this time; the king was once conversing with his courtiers, speaking of days gone by, when the President Frémiot said to him, "I confess, Sire, that if your majesty had not frankly cried, '*Vive l'Eglise Romaine*,' I should never have said, '*Vive le Roi Henri IV.*'" This noble monarch was so delighted with this

reply, that he began laughing, and said to one of his favourites, a marshal of France, "If you wish to act the part of a traitor, you must seek the aid of some one else besides M. Frémiot." His majesty offered him some important offices at Paris, but he was so attached to Dijon, that he would not leave it. As he could not become a priest, in consequence of his having been married twice, and his last wife a widow when he married her, he resigned his ecclesiastical benefices to his son, whom God had called to the ecclesiastical state, and he discharged his office as the second president of the Parliament of Dijon with all justice and sincerity of conscience.

CHAPTER III.

HOW SHE BEHAVED AS A DAUGHTER, AND HER MARRIAGE WITH THE BARON DE CHANTAL.

During all these troubles our Blessed Mother had grown much in every way, and although the president wished to keep her at home, he, nevertheless, allowed her leisure to visit her elder sister, Marguerite Frémiot, who had married M. de Neufchaize, Baron d'Effran. She desired much to take her with her to Poitou, and God permitted it, to show forth the strength and virtue of our saint; for here her innocence was strongly

attacked, and her virtue would have made shipwreck, had not God, who had elected her for Himself, assisted her with special grace. Baron d'Effran had an aged housekeeper, who did all in her power to corrupt this lovely flower; she wished to teach her dissimulation, and other things yet more pernicious, for it was suspected she used incantations. As she perceived that this young lady would not consent to her propositions, and that besides she had much courage, she changed her mode of attack, and promised, if she would believe her, that she would succeed in enabling her to marry one of the first seigneurs in Poitou. It was now that our Blessed Mother had especial need of Divine grace; she had often recourse to the Blessed Virgin, whom she had taken as her mother from her infancy, and she ever after fully believed that she escaped the snares of this wicked woman through the aid of that divine mother of orphans. Our Blessed Mother did all in her power to induce her sister, the Baroness d'Effran, to discharge her as soon as possible, but the old woman had more influence in preserving her place, though her sister had reason eventually to repent her misplaced confidence. This poor creature met with a miserable end, after having seduced several girls, who, with less prudence than our Blessed Mother, fell victims to the artifices of this enchantress.

Another circumstance occurred while she was staying with her brother-in-law, which proved her great love for the church. It was a proposition for her hand on the part of a young Huguenot

nobleman, a sworn friend of Baron d'Effran, and who hoped, through his interest, to marry her; and as he saw that she was very pious, he pretended that he was a Catholic, in order better to succeed in his designs. But the Blessed Virgin had not abandoned this beloved soul, and obtained such light for her from God, that she clearly perceived that he had not the true Roman faith; and although exceedingly accomplished, and every way calculated to make her happy, still she held him in the greatest aversion; an aversion caused by God showing her that her admirer was in error. This aversion on her part was increased by seeing so many monasteries, churches, and chapels, devastated, profaned, and burnt to the ground by the Huguenots. The Blessed Mother has frequently told us in great simplicity that she has often cried at seeing those churches in so lamentable a state, and that occasionally she dared not take off her veil, lest traces of her tears should be perceived, and enquiry should be made why she was unhappy at her brother-in-law's. She absolutely rejected this young nobleman, plainly telling M. le Baron d'Effran that she would rather live in a prison than in a château belonging to a Huguenot, and would rather die a thousand deaths one after another, than see herself tied by marriage to an enemy of the Church. Her firmness made her suffer much, but she always showed such prudence in her conduct, that the young nobleman, unable to shake her constancy, threw off the mask, and openly declared himself to be a heretic.

Our Blessed Mother was obliged to return to Dijon, on account of the many offers she received, agreeable, indeed, to the Baron d'Effran, but opposite to the designs of her father, who sent for her home when she least expected it. The sisters separated, not good friends, though they had always been so friendly as never to have had the slightest misunderstanding, as our Blessed Mother obeyed her as if she had been her own mother. She received many offers on her return to Dijon, but she behaved with such reserve, that she seemed to have no other will than that of her father, in whose good graces the Baron de Chantal had insinuated himself by his extraordinary valour and fidelity to the royalist party during the time of the League. It was to this brave nobleman that our Blessed Mother was given in marriage when she was about twenty, and the Baron de Chantal about twenty-seven or twenty-eight. It was one of the most advantageous marriages that had been seen, both parties being well-looking, talented, and of good family. As to our Blessed Mother, she was tall, of a majestic mien, and exceedingly beautiful; of a lively and gay disposition, with a clear judgment, and not in the slightest degree light or trifling. In short, she was such as to be called the perfect lady; and it was with regret that people saw her leave Dijon for Bourbilly, where Baron de Chantal generally resided.

CHAPTER IV.

OF HER LIFE IN THE COUNTRY.

After having received his bride as cordially as her heart could desire, the Baron de Chantal desired her to take charge of the household affairs, where great watchfulness was required. To this she had very great repugnance, for she had never been experimentally acquainted with anxiety, and she felt extremely opposed to sacrifice her innocent liberty for the embarrassments of the house. Baron de Chantal, who was a man of extreme good sense, said to her one day with great seriousness, that she must resolve to bear this burden, for the "wise woman buildeth her house, but the foolish will pull down with her hands that also which is built." To encourage her yet more, he set before her the example of his mother, the late Baroness de Chantal, a woman of incomparable piety, and how it would be acting wrongly to allow her good actions to be buried with her. She was a young lady of good family, who had been in the suite of one of the princesses of France, and accordingly totally unacquainted with all domestic affairs; nevertheless, when she married M. de Chantal, father-in-law to our Blessed Mother, finding that she had connected herself with a family who were in difficulties, she acted with such great prudence, that in a short time everything was perfectly restored. This

lady was a model of virtue, having retained nothing of the court life but its sense of honour and its politeness. God wishing to make her an example of patience, permitted her to be attacked with a cancer, which ate away her wrist and even a portion of her arm : every morning a servant gave her fresh linen ; and she remained alone in her room, and attended to her own wounds, placing fresh pieces of meat in order that this violent disease might devour it instead of her flesh. Thus she suffered for several years with such submission to the holy will of God, and courage, that none perceived that she was ailing. It is true, that she was often seen to cry, but the cause was unknown. One day her son, the Baron de Chantal, said to her, "Madame, how long shall I see you so unhappy without knowing why?" She replied, "Son, what shall I tell you! I am a living putrefaction, but such is God's will." He never afterwards ventured to inquire into the reason of her sadness.

Seeing that her complaint was gaining ground, she sent for her medical attendants during the absence of Baron de Chantal, and told them of her complaint, begging them, if it was possible to cure her, to do so as soon as possible. They were astonished at her patience, but unwilling to undertake anything without the consent of M. de Chantal, they sent for him. He was exceedingly astonished at seeing her state. "Sir," said she, "I ask pardon for having concealed my disease from you ; but I believed that I was doing right, and practising Christian patience in suffer-

ing silently all that God sent me; but I now fear that I shall be a suicide, unless something be done to alleviate my disease." M. de Chantal, blaming her silence with tears, wished to take her to Paris, and place her in the hands of the king's physicians. "No," said she, "you must only permit my usual medical attendants to do what they can; after that our Lord will do what He wishes." They wanted to tie her to her bed, then apply the knife, but she believed it to be perfectly useless, saying, that reason and the fear of God are the strongest chains a Christian woman can have; and that they had no cause to fear, as she was accustomed to suffering by looking at the crucifix. The surgeon then commenced his office, cutting away the corrupt and mortified flesh, until he came to the sound part, when he applied caustic. While undergoing this painful operation, Madame de Chantal never once moved, or even so much as uttered a word, but kept her eyes fixed heavenward. After the operation, it was believed that she was completely cured. But as the surgeons had not touched one of the ribs which was infected, for fear of hurting her internally, it again broke out, and in another year caused the death of this virtuous lady several years before the marriage of her beloved son. Our Blessed Mother was so affected by this touching narrative, that through regret of not having the blessing of her presence and advice, she resolved from that day to make her her model, and without any more dispute, undertook the care of the household affairs.

CHAPTER V.

HOW SHE BEHAVED AT HOME, AND HOW WELL SHE GOVERNED HER FAMILY.

"SHE bound up her loins and strengthened her arm," to undertake the charge of the household affairs, where she found everything in great confusion; for it must be here remarked that M. de Chantal, the father-in-law of our saint, lived at Monthélon, while his son resided at Bourbilly. The first thing which she arranged was, that the mass of the foundation attached to the chapel, and which was scarcely ever said, should be re-established; she then arranged the wages of the servants of both sexes, and also gave orders that the farmers, tenants, stewards, and others, should hereafter address themselves to her on business. As she regulated her household, so also she put herself under rule; for finding herself completely in the country, and in a household of great expenses, she did not, like worldly ladies, seek to make a show of her gold and silver, but contented herself with linen; on festivals, when compelled to appear in better attire, she wore her old dresses. But on other days she only wore camlet, but with such grace, that she always appeared better dressed than those ladies who ruin themselves by their extravagant apparel; so that she had no necessity to borrow her lustre from the richness of her clothes. She rose at day-

break, so that she had everything arranged and the servants at work before her husband got up. She daily heard mass in the chapel of the château with the greater part of her household; but on Sundays and festivals she was in the habit of going to the parish church, though at a distance of half a league. Her husband would occasionally wish to keep her at home, on the plea that she could satisfy the obligation by hearing mass in her chapel, without going so far, but her invariable reply was, that the nobility should set an example to the peasants in frequenting church, and assisting at the Divine service; besides, she said she felt particular pleasure in adoring God with the people. Thus she insensibly gained over M. de Chantal and her friends, who were on a visit at the château, to accompany her to the parish church. When M. de Chantal desired to hunt early in the morning of any festival, she used to make him and even his suite hear mass before leaving; with the exception of this watchfulness, that her husband should hear mass daily, she did not seem to do more than another, and often has she, lamenting her want of devotion, said she only thought of observing the commandments of God and His Church, contenting her husband, and arranging her household affairs. Her ordinary reading was the "Lives of the Saints," and occasionally the "Annals of France," or some other historical work; for she never read any bad books, or allowed them to be in her house, having burnt several which she there found. The work of piety in which she appeared to take the

greatest delight after her marriage was alms-giving; and she has told us in confidence that she was enabled with greater liberty to lay her necessities before our Lord when she had bestowed alms. Her charity was exceedingly remarkable during the year of the great famine; giving a daily allowance of bread and soup to all those who presented themselves at the château, and they were a large number; the poor coming from six and seven leagues round to obtain their daily bread from this careful housekeeper, who herself distributed this alms. And in order that it should be done with regularity, she had a door in the inner court opened, thus making them enter by one door and leave by the other, when they had received their alms. Occasionally some of them, after receiving from her her bounty, would make the circuit of the château and again return; and though their benefactress clearly saw through their deceit, she never had sufficient courage to have them turned out or put to confusion; saying to herself, "O my God, I am continually begging at the door of Thy mercies; should I wish to be driven away if I presented myself twice or thrice? Often and often hast Thou kindly borne with my importunities; and shall I not endure that of Thy creatures?" She herself was accustomed to take their porringers and fill them with soup, giving them at the same time the bread which had been previously cut in slices.

Besides this general and public charity, she took care of several families, who were ashamed to beg, sending them daily bread, according to

the number of their household. When this saintly nurse of the poor had long fed the poor, as she had no longer any corn, (for they baked four times a week) she sent to her farms to see if she could continue her charity, and when she found that she had only one barrel of wheat flour, and very little barley, she was not dismayed, but inspired to place her confidence in God, who provided for her wants, inasmuch as her provisions lasted for six months, during the continuation of the famine. And when God brought back prosperity, the servants on going, through curiosity, to see this little heap of corn, which did not seem to have been touched since their last visit. We had heard it related as a miracle by some of them; and having entreated our Blessed Mother to tell us how it happened, she related it to us as above, adding, through humility, that she had always attributed this grace to the great virtue and piety of one of her servants, (Dame Jeanne) in whose prayers she had great confidence.

She was severe in expelling vice from her house, but extremely kind to those whose faults were not produced by malice; and had such address in calming her husband when she perceived that he was annoyed with any one, or wished to punish a delinquent hastily, that M. de Chantal used to say to her, "If I am too quick, you are too charitable." He occasionally imprisoned some of his tenants in the *château* prison, which was unhealthy, on account of its humidity; when she imagined that the delinquents were too delicate,

our saint was wont to release them from prison and put them to sleep in a bed, and on the morrow at an early hour, not to displease her husband, she would put them in prison, and then go to see M. de Chantal, when she was wont to ask him to liberate his prisoners.

As an instance of her great prudence, she only twice changed her servants during the eight years she was married and the nine years of her widowhood, and that on account of their being incorrigible. She was neither a wrangler nor a sloven among her servants, as she was loved and praised by her servants on account of her virtue; in a word, her house was the dwelling of peace, honour, high breeding, Christian piety, and a joy truly noble and innocent.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW VIRTUOUSLY SHE BEHAVED HERSELF DURING HER HUSBAND'S ABSENCE.

It is true that the joy of our Blessed Mother was often interrupted by Baron de Chantal being often from home at court and in the army. Whenever he was absent our wise Laodamia deprived herself of every pleasure, God having rendered their friendship so true, sincere, and reciprocal, that there was never even the slightest disagreement between them. During her husband's absence our Blessed Mother never left her house save to visit some near neighbour, and dressed

as usual, such being her husband's desire; and when spoken to she was wont to reply, "Do not speak to me of that; the eyes that I wish to please are a hundred leagues hence; and therefore it would be useless for me to dress grandly." The château of Bourbilly was a rendezvous for all the *noblesse* of the environs and the best company of Sémur: during M. de Chantal's absence she saw no company, and if perchance a stranger arrived, they were received with great civility by our Blessed Mother, but with such modesty, (especially young men) that they soon saw that Bourbilly had no amusements to offer them. She showed a holy skill in all her actions. There was a young nobleman, an intimate friend of M. de Chantal, whom the demon had instilled into a passion for our saint, and who had undertaken to pursue her, though the rare modesty of this young woman prevented his openly declaring his infamous designs. When M. de Chantal was at home he never went out, save to go to the hunt. During his absence this unfortunate young man visited our Blessed Mother, who received him as her husband's friend; as the evening drew in, perceiving that he had begun praising her, by a holy artifice our Blessed Mother, without allowing him to perceive that she was acquainted with his passion, said that she was exceedingly sorry that the Baron de Chantal was not at home to amuse and divert him, and that she felt no pleasure in any amusement during her husband's absence; besides, she was obliged to go out on business, and therefore bidding him adieu, left

the house for the night. The young man was, on his side, so confused and abashed at her great modesty, as never again to call on her during her husband's absence.

Our Blessed Mother herself was wont to say that during M. de Chantal's absence, her heart and affections turned towards our Lord, so that she was then usually exceedingly devout: "As soon as M. de Chantal leaves home," said she, "I feel in my heart a great desire to be altogether with God. But, alas! I know not how to profit by the grace with which God has endowed me, and I only pray for the preservation and return of M. de Chantal." When this beloved husband returned, the affection that our Blessed Mother had for him, made her forget her preceding devotions, having no longer any time to pray to God, from being occupied with the Baron's company. It was thus in 1601, when, during the absence of her husband, she promised God that on his return she would be as devout as during his absence. In 1601 M. de Chantal returned from the court, in order that he should not be compelled to acquiesce in an act of injustice. On his departure, this nobleman, who had a taste for poetry, composed a song, wherein he bade adieu to the ladies of the court, and declared that the thought alone of the virtue of his consort, engraved in his soul a contempt of the grandeurs and vanities of the court. Had he remained he would have been created Marshal of France, as much for his own merit, as for the high esteem in which his father-in-law the President Frémiot

was held; but God had other designs. The baron returned home ill with the dysentery. His wife, who had loved him so dearly during his health, evinced by her attention what great affection she had for him, her only exercise being from her chapel to the bed-side of her patient. Almost daily these two dove-like souls conversed on the vanity of this life, and the great happiness of serving God in retirement from the world. The sick man, as if endued with a presentiment of his death, though he did not believe it, expressed a wish that both parties should promise that the first freed by death should consecrate the remainder of their days to the service of God. Our Blessed Mother was grieved to hear him speak of a division, and diverted him from the proposal as soon as he entered on it. The baron, after having been confined to his room for five or six months, was restored to health. His appetite and sleep returned, when one night he dreamed that his dress, by an unexpected accident, was dyed in purple, and that he had been created a cardinal. In the morning he related his dream to our Blessed Mother, adding, that this dream portended that he should be wounded in some engagement, and that his dress would be dyed with his own blood. At this our saint only laughed, being above all vulgar superstition. "Well," said she, "I dreamt that I was dressed in black, as a widow; but this I perceive has only come from your illness, and therefore I paid no attention to it." The baron, whom God thus prepared for his approaching end, only replied by looking up to heaven.

He became day by day more convalescent, so that it might have been thought that he was a hundred leagues distant from the grave.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW BARON DE CHANTAL WAS WOUNDED WHILE HUNTING, AND HIS HAPPY DEATH.

We may say that the baron's health was the cause of his death; for a relative, one of his intimate friends, going to congratulate him on his convalescence, persuaded him to go out hunting in a neighbouring wood for exercise, as well as recreation. The good nobleman, who, passionately loved this amusement, willingly consented. They went on foot to a kind of sport called *Le Traquet.* While lying in wait at the defile for the game, they carried their muskets ready primed and cocked, and their dog chained. The Baron de Chantal warned his friend to take care lest a branch should touch his gun, and cause it to go off; but scarcely had he uttered this warning, before his friend's gun was discharged, and the poor Baron de Chantal mortally wounded in the thigh, and he thus saw himself covered with the purple of his own blood. "I am a dead man, my friend; but I pardon you with my whole heart; this fatal blow has come of your imprudence." After this generous pardon, he sent four of his servants to four different parishes, in order that, if

they did not meet with the rector in one parish, they might in another, for the purpose of administering to him the last sacraments: he sent a fifth to his wife; "Do not let her know that I am mortally wounded; only say that I am wounded in the thigh." This last messenger found the baroness in bed, she having been only confined of her youngest child about a fortnight. As soon as she received this message, she exclaimed: "Alas! the pill is only gilded for me;" and immediately jumping out of bed, and dressing herself, she hastened towards her beloved husband, whom they had conveyed to a cottage in the neighbouring village. His first exclamation on seeing her was, "My dear, the decree of heaven is just; we must welcome it; we must die." "No, no," replied she, "we must try and cure you." "That will be in vain," said he. She would have said a few words on his friend's imprudence, but was interrupted by the baron saying, "Let us honour the Divine Providence, and regard this blow as coming from on high." The generous nobleman, in a spirit of tranquillity and resignation, inquired if a priest had yet arrived; and he confessed to one who came. What an admirable thing is the constancy of noble hearts! He spoke of his wound and his approaching end as if some one else instead of himself had been wounded; and perceiving the friend who had wounded him going about like one mad, he called out to him; "This blow, my dear friend, has sent me to heaven; do not, then, sin by detesting yourself for an act in which you have not in any way sinned;

think of God, and remember that you are a Christian." We are told that this gentleman was about to commit suicide, to revenge the tragical death of his friend and relative. The medical men soon arrived, to whom the poor baroness said, "You must absolutely cure M. de Chantal." The patient heard this in his bed, and said with a smile, "If it be not the will of the Heavenly Physician, these will do nothing." He was conveyed home, where everything was done to effect his cure. Our Blessed Mother was so afflicted, that she persuaded the medical men, for fear of an accident, to make an incision in his side to extract the balls, lest mortification should take place, after which all hope would be lost. The patient was quite resigned, and exhorted the baroness to be so also; saying that the will of God alone should console the Christian, and that she should receive his death with submission and resignation. Her grief was so great that she could not so much as hear of this resignation, and going into her room and throwing herself on her knees, exclaimed, "Lord, take all I have in the world, parents, property, and children, but leave me this dear husband whom Thou hast given me." She offered the accessories to God, and kept the principal for herself; but Divine Providence otherwise willed.

This brave nobleman died in the flower of his age, and a week after his wound. After having performed various acts of piety, which could be desired of a religious man, and being fortified with all the sacraments, he particularly requested

that his friend should not be prosecuted, saying, "I willingly pardon him, for I have often by the malice of my sins mortally wounded Jesus Christ." He then urged his beloved wife to moderate her regret, and pardon his innocent murderer; and stated in his will that he disinherited that child who desired to revenge his death.

At the time that this nobleman expired, his father, who was ill about twelve leagues from Bourbilly, saw a large body of young men, beautifully dressed, and looking like angels, who were leading into a far country the Baron de Chantal, who, going to his bedside, gave him a slight tap on his shoulder as a sign of bidding him adieu. The good old man awoke up in tears, and saying, "My son de Chantal is dead." A messenger was immediately dispatched from Bourbilly, who met a servant sent to announce the melancholy intelligence, and on comparing notes they found that he had died at the very moment that the vision had been seen by his father. We shall not here describe the regret of his disconsolate widow, to whom he had only been married eight years; she had had six children, four only of whom were alive. She paid the last honours to her beloved husband with much devotion, but with many tears. She wore a crape veil, as she had dreamed, so that it was not a vision but a heavenly warning, to prepare her heart for the cross; for from that moment she was crucified to the world and the world was crucified to her.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF HER GREAT AFFLICTION, AND HER BEHAVIOUR DURING HER WIDOWHOOD.

Every action of this heart-broken widow loudly exclaimed, call me "Mara, for the Omnipotent One hath filled my heart with bitterness." Her tears fell not to the earth, but ascended to heaven, and God so took possession of her heart, that from the very commencement of her widowhood, she turned all her affections towards Him. She received an almost imperceptible light, by which she perceived that God had wounded to cure her, and therefore she often said, "God hath done all in His mercy." Thus her soul was submissive to the will of God; but though her sorrow was accompanied by peace, she was nevertheless very sorrowful. Her only delight was to walk in a wood near her house, where she could pour out her heart before God, who, having destined her, like another Judith, to put to death the Holophernes of the world, inspired her with holy affection; for she at once made a vow of chastity, and kept herself as much as she could in her own room to pray before the Lord. Our first mothers and sisters, having besought our saint to show them how God had withdrawn her from the world, she, after much persuasion, yielded to them, and wrote as follows: "When it pleased the Sovereign Providence of God to snap in sun-

der the knot which bound me to the world, He at the same time gave me much light to see the nothingness of this life, and a great desire to consecrate myself to God; I then took the vow of chastity; for even some short time before my widowhood, God had drawn me to serve Him; but a few months after, besides my great affliction, it pleased God to permit my soul to be agitated by divers and violent temptations, so that I should, without doubt, have perished, had not His goodness taken compassion on me. Amid these trials, our Lord increased in me the desire of serving Him; the attraction which I received from God was so great, that I would have willingly left all and gone into a desert to serve Him more entirely and more perfectly; and, indeed, I believe I should have fled to the Holy Land, and there have finished my days, had I not been retained by a sense of my duty to my children. I felt an inexplicable desire to know the will of God, and to follow it at all hazards, and this desire was so great, that it entirely consumed me. My heart required that the will of God should be every moment made known to me. This desire, however, did not calm my temptations, but, on the contrary, they became more and more intolerable, as I knew they prevented my serving and loving God as I desired." These were the very words used by our Blessed Mother. Her friends, seeing her looking ill, and buried in continual solitude, silence, and tears, ignorant of what was passing in her soul, believed that she was a prey to regret. Although the suf-

ferings of her widowhood were great, still they did not equal her other sufferings, which, being only known to God, remedies were adopted which had no effect on her disease; for her friends never left her alone, but endeavoured to amuse her. Her neighbours, who loved her much, visited her often; her aunts and cousins from Dijon came to stay with her in turns at Bourbilly, imagining they were doing an act of charity in consoling her; but they would have done much better had they left her alone with our Lord. In the evening, when this virtuous widow had retired to her room, she would say occasionally to her daughters, "Alas! would that they allowed me to cry as I wished; they thought of comforting me, but they only martyred me!" She used to pray in her oratory, and weep before God, and she attached herself in such a manner to prayer, that she would forget to go to bed. She was even occasionally wont, when all had retired to rest, to rise and pass part of the night in prayer. This was observed by those who served her, and so they watched alternately in order to make their good mistress go to bed, while she only delighted in lying on the ground, and weeping before God, like a swallow hungering after perfection, or as a peaceable dove brooding in His Presence.

CHAPTER IX.

OF HER DEMANDING OF GOD A DIRECTOR, PROCEEDING FROM A VEHEMENT DESIRE TO BE DIRECTED IN THE WAY OF PERFECTION.

A FEW months after the decease of M. de Chantal, his devout widow distributed all her clothes, as well as those of her husband, to the neighbouring churches, as ornaments for the altar, wishing no other wedding garment than that which is requisite for the evangelical festival and the wedding of the Lamb. She dismissed her husband's servants, only reserving a small number for herself and her four children, in perfect conformity to the life which she desired to lead. She drew up a plan for her day; and the hours which she had spent in hunting and other amusements, for her husband's pleasure, were now employed in prayer, reading, and good works. One day while she was in prayer, God gave her so earnest a desire of having a conductor who would guide her in the way of perfection, and teach her the will of God, that she continually asked Him for it. "Alas!" said she, writing to our first mothers, "I desired a director, and asked for that of which I knew nothing; for though I had been brought up by pious persons, and my conversation was upright, still I had never heard a director or a spiritual master mentioned, nor anything approaching thereto; but God placed this desire in my heart,

and the inspiration of asking of Him a director was so great, that I made the petition with great earnestness; I spoke to God as if I had seen Him with my own eyes, so certain was I that I should be heard; I laid before God His faithfulness, inasmuch as He had pledged His word that He would not give a stone to one that would ask for bread, that He would open to those who would knock at the door of His mercy, and similar words, though I knew not whence they came to me, but I felt afterwards that God Himself had taught me the manner in which He willed that I should ask for that which He desired to give me. When walking alone I used to be so carried away as to repeat words similar to the following, aloud: 'I beseech Thee, O my God, by the truth and fidelity of Thy promises, to give me a spiritual guide, one who is truly a saint and Thy servant, who will teach me Thy will, and all that Thou desirest of me, and I promise and swear in Thy presence that I will perform all that he shall tell me on Thy behalf.' In fine, all that a heart could invent, I said to our Lord, to incline Him to accede to my petition, ever repeating to Him the promise that I had made of obeying that holy man whom I asked with such earnestness." These are the very words of our Blessed Mother, who not only prayed and fasted herself, but requested several of her poor pensioners, to whom she gave alms, to pray for her intention.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE VARIOUS VISIONS WITH WHICH SHE WAS FAVOURED, AS WELL OF OUR BLESSED FATHER AS OF THE DESIGNS THAT GOD HAD UPON HER.

Our Blessed Mother, during this conflict, went out riding one day, and as she rode along, continued in thought to beseech our Lord to show her that faithful guide who was to conduct her to Him. She was passing by the high road, close to a meadow in a beautiful and vast plain, when she suddenly saw at the bottom of the hill not far from her, a man resembling in figure our Blessed Father Francis de Sales, bishop of Geneva, habited in a black cassock, rochet, and berretta, just as he was the first time she saw him at Dijon. This vision gave her great consolation, inasmuch as she was assured that God had heard her prayer. While looking at this admirable prelate, she heard a voice, which said to her: "Behold your guide, the well-beloved of God and men, in whose hands you must rest your conscience;" then the vision disappeared from the eyes of her body, but it remained so imprinted on her soul, that about thirty-five years afterwards she told a person in confidence, that it was as fresh in her mind as on the day that she received that heavenly favour, which was followed by several others.

The following have come to our knowledge. Being one morning in bed, a little fatigued, she saw her-

self in a chariot with several young people who were going on a journey, and it seemed to her as if the carriage passed before a church, where she saw a number of persons praising God with great gravity and joy. "I desired," said she, "to go out and join the blessed body, and enter by the large door of the church, which was opened for me, but I was rejected, and I distinctly heard a voice, which said to me: 'You must go farther, for you only enter into the sacred repose of the children of God by the gate of S. Claude.' I was so little devout," added she, "that I had never paid attention to the Blessed Saint whose devotion was then pressed on my heart; and this vision gave me great comfort. So that when I was attacked more rudely, I said to my soul, by way of consolation, 'Be patient, my soul; God has promised you that you shall enter into the sacred repose of His children through the gate of S. Claude." A few months after this vision, I happened to be surprised one day with a great desire to be in heaven; I was for some time in this state of ecstasy, and on recovering thence I seemed to have come from another world, where I had heard that God had said to my soul: 'As My Son Jesus was obedient, so I destine you to be obedient.' At another time, while walking in the wood near to my father-in-law's château at Monthélon, I was seized with an interior desire to pray, so that I was as it were compelled to enter a neighbouring church. There it was shown me that our Heavenly Lord desired to consume in me all that was selfish, and that I should be tried exteriorly and interiorly. I

shuddered much when I returned to myself. But my heart remained in great joy in the presence of God, because to suffer for God seemed the nourishment of love on earth, as to enjoy God is its nourishment in heaven. At another time, while in the chapel of Bourbilly, God showed me an innumerable company of widows and virgins, who came and surrounded me, and a voice said to me, 'Thou, My true servant, wilt have this generation; they will be a chosen body, but I wish they should also be holy.' I knew not what this meant, for since God had told me He desired me to be obedient, I would not suffer in my soul the desire to do anything myself, and I always waited until God sent me the saint whom He had shown me, resolved to do that which He ordered me." These divine favours passed away as to their sweetness; but our Blessed Mother continuing to be tempted, she advanced in the desire of perfection without any other guide than God; being in the country, and unable to confer with any one in her trials.

We must here remark, that nearly about the time that our Lord showed to His faithful servant him whom He had chosen as her guide, His Divine Majesty also discovered to our Blessed Father, in a vision, in the chapel of the château of Sales, the principles of our congregation. He also showed him in spirit her whom He had chosen as its first foundation-stone; so that these holy souls on meeting for the first time at Dijon, recognized one another, as the reader will presently see.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW SHE PLACED HERSELF UNDER THE DIRECTION OF ONE WHO WAS NOT HIM THAT GOD HAD CHOSEN.

M. Fremiót, imagining that he should be able to amuse his beloved daughter, invited her, as soon as the first year of her widowhood was at an end, to come and reside at Dijon with him. This pious widow wept much while with her father, to whom, however, she dared not reveal the chief cause of her grief, it being a powerful aversion to the world, and a burning desire of God, and of obedience, by which she wished to direct her life. Her principal amusement at Dijon was to visit the places of devotion, which are in great numbers, as well in the city as in the environs, and everywhere she demanded of God the saint who was to guide her soul. One day, having gone to Notre Dame de l'Etang, which was a pilgrimage church of great resort, situated about two leagues from Dijon, she there met with a religious and a few devout souls; she spoke to them, and a mutual delight was felt on both sides, inasmuch as her great piety was already known. These persons, who were the spiritual children of the Rev. Father, urged her to put her soul in his hands, to which she submitted in order to oblige them. "I clearly saw it was not he whom I had seen in vision; nevertheless, urged by the necessity of my temptations, I hastened to him, fearing that I might

have been deceived, and that my vision was but the effect of my imagination."

Thus this Blessed Mother, as an humble sheep, believing that it was the will of the Sovereign Master, allowed herself to be bound by this shepherd, who, delighted at having so holy a sheep within his hands, obliged her to his direction by four vows ; first, that she would obey him ; secondly, that she would never change her director ; thirdly, that she would keep secret all that he told her ; and fourthly, that she would confer with none other but himself respecting her interior. By these ties this holy soul was not fastened to the mild and light yoke of our Lord ; they were more like nets, which kept her soul as it were in a snare, constrained, and without liberty. She met with much difficulty while under the guidance of this father ; and she underwent much internal sorrow in thinking that he was not the person whom God had shown her. Her mind, which had by a divine influence received the impression of the truth, could not submit to this deception ; but actuated by her great desire of being directed, she felt persuaded that her disgust arose from her little virtue. Her soul was disquieted, rather than directed by the voice of this pastor ; for though he was a learned and virtuous man, he did not know the designs of God on her noble soul. Desirous to lead her in his own way, he kept her in a state of perpetual anxiety, and made her drink of the waters of Mara in their natural bitterness, without having the light to throw therein the sweetening wood of cordial and intimate devo-

tion. He caused her to walk through a rough wilderness, and gave her no help in gathering the interior manna which fell therein.

This truly obedient woman, wonderful to say, was like a statue in the hands of her director, without the slightest resistance. She implicitly followed his advice, though opposed to the disposition of her heart. He loaded her with a quantity of different prayers, meditations, speculations, actions, methods, practices, and observances, and extremely laborious considerations and reasonings. He ordered her also to practise certain exercises during the night, fasting, disciplines, and other macerations. She was so submissive and respectful towards this good father, that she never omitted performing an iota of all that he ordered her to do; and she lived in this state of martyrdom for two years and a few months, ever languishing after God, whom she found not, inasmuch as she did not take the road by which He wished to communicate Himself to her soul. Whence she learned, as she afterwards said, how necessary it is for those who have the guidance of souls to lead them in the way of God, and not according to the obscure light of the human understanding, and that the designs of our Lord are as different regarding each individual soul as they are regarding each creature.

CHAPTER XII.

OF HER ADMIRABLE PATIENCE WHILE LIVING WITH HER FATHER-IN-LAW.

Our Blessed Mother did not reside at Dijon as long as she could have desired, for being entrusted with the guardianship of her children, it became incumbent on her to think of their interests. She accordingly returned to Bourbilly, where, as soon as she was arrived, her father-in-law, M. de Chantal, a man of great austerity, and about seventy-five years of age, wrote to tell her that he wished her to stay with him, or else he would re-marry and disinherit her children. The virtuous widow received this command from her father-in-law in the light of an obedience, and uniting her heart to this cross, went to reside with him with her four children, there to spend seven years and a half in a state of purgatory. She who had so great an ability in managing household affairs was not allowed to take any part in the household affairs at Monthélon ; she and her small suite were only boarded there, the rest of her revenue coming from Bourbilly. The old man had a servant who was always with him, to whom he had entrusted his house and all his property ; and assuredly as nothing is more insupportable than a servant who has become a mistress, this woman carried everything with so high a hand, that our humble saint dared not give a glass of wine to a messen-

ger without her consent. Our Blessed Mother, moreover, was obliged to undertake the care of five of this woman's children, who were treated as if on a level with her own ; and the servant often roused the anger of the old man against the saint, and even occasionally insulted her, but this faithful friend of God returned good for evil, and became the servant and teacher of her children, teaching them to read, combing their hair, and occasionally dressing them.

It was indeed a grievous thing for our Blessed Mother to see this woman wasting her father-in-law's property, and acting as if she was absolute mistress of everything ; she endeavoured to remedy it, but she soon perceived that she thereby angered her father-in-law, who wished that everything should be left to the management of this creature. She therefore resolved to be patient, in which virtue she possessed her soul, and to exercise no other authority save that of serving the poor. She had accordingly a little room in a distant part of the château fitted up, where she kept her medicines and ointments for the poor and the sick, who came to her from all sides. After having paid her respects to her father-in-law, she withdrew, as far as she could, from all company, and employed her time in instructing her children, or working for the poor and the Church, having made a vow that all her work should be employed for this twofold purpose,—a vow which she observed with such rigour, that if she was hindered in it by doing anything for herself or her children, she made her maid work in her place,

regarding every moment of her life as consecrated to God, and out of her own power. She was never idle. Even while entertaining her father-in-law's company, she was wont to work. Her maid begging her one day to relax from her great assiduity, she replied, "I believe when I employ my time uselessly, that I am robbing the Church and the poor, to whose service I have consecrated every moment of my life." She obtained permission from her father-in-law, by her great prudence and mildness, that whenever it was possible she might have mass; and accordingly she transferred for that purpose the foundation from Bourbilly (where her steward resided) to Monthélon. Ever since her widowhood, when she did not spend the Lent at Dijon, she was wont to rise early in the morning and ride to Autun (about three short leagues from Monthélon) to hear the sermon, and immediately afterwards would return home as quick as possible, fasting, to be present when her father-in-law was accustomed to sit down to table, endeavouring, as far as she could, not to give him cause for annoyance. She had discovered that she could pass through certain lanes, so that she was neither seen nor stopped, and she often returned from the town without having spoken to a soul, contenting herself with hearing the word of God and concealing it in her heart, that she might reduce it to practice.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF HER FIRST CONFERENCE WITH OUR BLESSED FATHER, AND HOW THESE HOLY SOULS RECOGNIZED ONE ANOTHER WITHOUT HAVING MET BEFORE.

This blessed soul waited in silence the assistance of God in her interior trials, when the Divine goodness gave her a glimpse of the star that was to lighten her amidst such darkness. The authorities of Dijon, in 1604, requested our Blessed Father to do them the honour of preaching the Lent station in their city; this good prelate consented thereto, though the world and hell seemed to be united in hindering him, because of state reasons; and afterwards he wrote that his soul secretly felt a presentiment of such great success in this voyage, that he never looked on it as a merely natural arrangement. M. Frémiot invited his beloved daughter to spend the Lent at Dijon with him, to hear the sermons of this holy man; she immediately complied, with the consent of her father-in-law, and started for Dijon, where she arrived on the first Friday in Lent, the day on which she saw our Blessed Father in the pulpit. She perceived at the first glance that he was the director whom God had shown her. She sat every day in front of the pulpit, to see and hear him. The holy prelate, on his part, though attentive to his sermon, perceived this widow among all the other ladies, and had a sweet remembrance of his vision at the

château de Sales. It is true that the attention necessary to his sermon rendered him nearly insensible to external objects, nevertheless, as he had recognized her whom God had formerly shown him, he felt a holy curiosity to know who she was, and chancing on the following day to meet Monsignor de Bourges, he said to him, "Can you tell me who is that young lady, a brunette, and dressed as a widow, who sits opposite to the pulpit, and pays such attention to the word of truth?" Monsignor de Bourges, with a smile, told him who she was, and our Blessed Father was extremely glad to know that she was his sister, these two great prelates having already contracted a close and holy friendship. Our Blessed Father often dined with M. Frémiot, or Monsignor de Bourges. Our Blessed Mother followed him everywhere as far as she could, and conceived so high an esteem for this holy man, that she has herself said to us, "I admired all that he did and said, and regarded him as an angel of the Lord; but I was so scrupulously attached to the guidance of my first director, that I could not communicate anything to any one without great fear, although the holy simplicity of the saint often urged me to do so; and yet I was longing to speak." Although she refrained, from conscientious scruples, which she dared not discover, yet she was so anxious to obey the saint, that she sought every way to do so. God furnished her with several opportunities, which, though not of great consequence, were in our opinion a subject of great edification. The holy father once asked

her if she purposed re-marrying; she replied in the negative. "Very well, then," was his lordship's answer, "you must take down your ensign." She understood what he meant; for she still wore certain ornaments allowed to ladies in their second mourning. On the morrow she divested herself of every ornament; an obedience which was extremely pleasing to our Blessed Father, who, while dining, remarked some lace on her crape headdress. "Madam," remarked he, "would it not be the same if that lace was not there?" On that very evening, while undressing, she unripped it herself. At another time, seeing some tassels to the ribband of her collar, he said to her with his accustomed sweetness of manner, "Madam, would not your collar look as well if that new-fangled invention was not fastened to the ribband?" She immediately took her scissors, and cut off the tassels.

Her director had such great fear that some one would rob him of the guidance of this lovely soul, that being obliged to leave Dijon for some time on business, he requested one of his spiritual children under obedience not to leave her alone. This our Blessed Mother would have felt as an intolerable constraint, if the scrupulous fear of failing in obedience had not been still more irksome to her. But our Lord, who wished to confer the true liberty of His children on this holy soul, sent her on Wednesday in Holy Week so severe a temptation, that, as her director was absent, she was compelled to seek some consolation from our Blessed Father, and in some way or other escaped the watchfulness

of the guardian her old director had placed near her. Monsignor de Bourges guarded the door of the room, to prevent any one entering, while his beloved sister was laying open her soul to the holy prelate, and whom she left in so peaceful a state of mind, that it seemed as if an angel had spoken to her. "And, nevertheless," said she, "the scruples of my vow, not to speak of my soul to any but my first director, so bound me, that I only said half of all that I wished to say." On the morrow (Maunday Thursday) our Blessed Father, who had assisted Monsignor de Bourges at his first mass, dined with him; our dear Mother was seated next to him at table, so that he overheard her saying to a lady that she purposed going to S. Claude, whereon he turned round, and said that if she told him when, he would try and meet her there, as he purposed going with his mother, who was about to perform a vow at S. Claude. Our Blessed Mother felt great joy at this expected meeting.

The week after Easter she told the holy prelate that she desired much to receive the sacraments from his hands. The Blessed Father mabe some slight objection to it as far as regarded the sacrament of penance, saying that women were often actuated by an idle curiosity; nevertheless, he granted her request, and God vouchsafed him so much light for the guidance of this holy soul, that he felt himself intimately united with her, as he afterwards said. She, on her side, was extremely calm, and desirous of following his advice; "not that I ever ventured," she said, "to think of leaving

my first director, to whose guidance this blessed prelate seemed to entrust me, telling me with his usual incomparable prudence, that they were both of accord in a matter of such importance as the disposition of my life, and the direction of my soul. Thus I was able to follow the counsel of this holy man, without the slightest scruple on my side, nor anger on that of my director, who had attached me to him by so many vows.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW OUR SAINT WAS CONSOLED BY TWO GREAT SERVANTS OF GOD ON HER DISTRESS AT CHANGING HER DIRECTOR.

Our Blessed Father left Dijon on the day after Low Sunday; after several holy and cordial words to our saint, he added, "Madame, God compels me to speak to you in confidence; His goodness has conferred on me the grace that as soon as I turn towards the altar to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice, I feel no distraction; but for some time you have ever been on my mind, not, indeed, to distract me, but to make me more attached to Him; I do not know what He means thereby." He said to her several other things in a serious tone, and at the first stage on leaving Dijon, he wrote her the following letter: "God, it seems, has given me to you, and I am hourly more and more assured of it; all that I can say is, 'Recommend me to your guardian angel.'" She received this

note with great delight, and kept it as a precious object, since it gave great peace to her soul, and filled her with a desire to abandon herself entirely in the hands of God, whose holy will she alone desired to accomplish. On the vigil of Pentecost, forty days after the departure of our Blessed Father, she was suddenly tried by a fresh temptation, a struggle between a powerful desire of acting under the guidance of the holy bishop, and a fear of leaving her first director. She thus spoke of this trial: "I dreaded being faithless to the Divine Will, which I desired to follow at all risk, and not knowing where it was to be found, I suffered a martyrdom which lasted for thirty-six hours, during which time I took neither sleep nor food, and I was free from all other temptations, and had great light in the matters of our holy faith. I marvelled at this, as it was my greatest trial. Now, pressed by this anguish, I prayed to our Lord that He would graciously vouchsafe to make known to me His holy will, protesting that I only wished to follow and obey Him faithfully. I felt that my soul only desired this, and that I desired to do His will." On the festival of Pentecost, she sent to her confessor, Father de Villars, rector of the Jesuits, to come to her, as she was unable to go to him, so agitated was her mind. She made known to him her trial, and that her desire to know the will of God was so pressing, that as soon as she uttered the word, "Will of God," it was like a brand which inflamed her soul, and, that not knowing where this will was to be found, she was much tormented. This good

father, who was a man deeply versed in science, and remarkable for his piety and religion, having heard an account of her trials, replied in a serious manner, "It is the will of God that your soul should be directed by the bishop of Geneva, and not by him whom you now follow. He has the spirit of God and the church, and the divine Providence has some great design on you, in giving you this terrestrial seraphim as your director." How wonderfully are holy souls, who seek only the will of their Master, affected by the advice of their director! While F. de Villars was speaking to her, our Blessed Mother felt her soul altogether inflamed. "It seemed to me," said she, "as if a mountain was removed from my heart, and I remained in great peace and assurance, being certain that what he said was the will of God; and that redoubled my courage." On the other hand, Almighty God so clearly showed to F. de Villars that this holy soul should be under the guidance of our holy Father, that he wrote as follows, after our establishment, to his Lordship: "Know, my Lord, that God gave me such an assurance as to Madame de Chantal, that His divine goodness would give her of the water of the Samaritan by means of your lips, that if the angels had endeavoured to persuade me otherwise, I do not think they could have done so, because the impression was made in my soul by the King of Angels." The first director of our Blessed Mother now returned, and was soon informed that his virtuous penitent had conferred with our Blessed Father; for she was scrupulous on account of her vow, and therefore told him

everything. He chided her severely; whereupon she had fresh trials, and although it was much against her will, she submitted to the advice of her director; but her soul finding no peace therefrom, she was in a strange state of perplexity. Father de Villars assured her that it was the will of God she should be placed under the guidance of the bishop of Geneva; but the pretended duty and obligations to her spiritual father kept her in a state of captivity. Not knowing what to do, she resolved to write to our Blessed Father all that passed between her director and herself, as well as the trials of her conscience, and the calm thereto brought to her by the Father Rector.

Here we must regret the loss of all the letters which this worthy mother wrote to our Blessed Father, who had marked them with his hand to be used in her life. But after the decease of S. Francis de Sales, this truly humble soul, having obtained all her letters from the late bishop of Geneva, the successor of our Blessed Father, she threw them into the fire; it is, however, true, that by the date of the answers of her prudent director we perceive the state of her soul, and may judge of her malady by the medicine administered thereto. In the first letter which the holy prelate wrote to his beloved spiritual daughter, he told her to pray to God, and to be sure that if it was His holy will, he should take charge of her soul; and that he only desired that the Divine will should be performed. The holy mother begged every one whom she believed to have some credit with our Lord, to pray for her intention; among others, she had

recourse to a Capuchin Father, who was looked on as a saint. One day while he was offering the adorable Sacrifice of the altar for this intention, he had a vision, in which God showed him his designs respecting our Blessed Mother; he said to her after his mass: "Madam, delay no longer; place yourself under the guidance of the bishop of Geneva; had God miraculously sent you His own Spirit to guide you, He could not do it more assuredly than by this holy prelate. He has the fulness of the Spirit of God by an admirable participation and communication which God has Himself imparted to him."

These assurances pacified our Blessed Mother, but she was soon importuned by her first director; who, perceiving that this holy soul was about to escape from his influence, commanded her to renew her vow which she had made under his direction; this she did from an act of obedience, at the same time informing S. Francis that she had done so. He replied on the 24th of June, 1604, by saying that he fully agreed with her, that she must have but one director, but that the having one spiritual father did not oppose her placing her confidence in another. "Do not trouble yourself with regard to me, provided you know that my soul is with you, and yours with me; I know that you have an entire and perfect confidence in my affection; know, also, that I have a great desire to serve you as far as I can. I cannot express the quality of my affection for you, but I must tell you that I think it is of God, and therefore I shall nourish it dearly, and I

daily see it increasing. Now, Madam, you may clearly perceive how you may employ me ; use all that God has given me for the service of your soul without any other obligation than that contracted by true charity and Christian friendship ; obey your first director faithfully and freely, and make use of me with frankness. You have felt not a little scrupulous of committing an act of duplicity, because you have imparted to me the state of your soul, and asked me for my advice ; I am delighted that you hold duplicity and deceit in horror ; there are no vices so detrimental to the progress of the soul ; but there is no duplicity here ; and if you committed some fault in opening your heart to me, on account of your scruple, you sufficiently effaced it afterwards, and need not speak of it to another ; nevertheless, I praise your candour ; only another time always look on that which is covered with the secresy of the sacrament as if it were unsaid. Now, God be praised, I should prefer your exceeding in simplicity, to your being deficient therein. I have taken up the pen more than twelve times to write to you ; it seems as if the enemy were opposed to it. I praise the divine goodness for the religious respect which you bear to your director ; if he gives you permission, write to me occasionally."

I have gone a little out of my way in quoting the very words of our Blessed Father, as they prove how prudently the holy prelate acted before undertaking the guidance of this noble soul, who, finding herself once more in great affliction, again applied to Father de Villars, who thus replied in a tone of

authority and firmness: "I do not only say that you must forego your first director, and place yourself entirely in the hands of the bishop of Geneva, but I say, moreover, on the part of God, that unless you do so, you will resist the Holy Spirit." She received these words from her confessor as a command from Heaven, and they removed her interior trials. She wrote to our Blessed Father, who replied to her, saying that she must pray much, but that it was absolutely necessary that they should have an interview before he resolved on becoming her director, and appointed Thonon or Gex as the place of meeting. God, however, disposed otherwise, as we shall presently see.

CHAPTER XV.

OF HER JOURNEY TO S. CLAUDE, WHERE OUR BLESSED FATHER ACCEPTED THE DIRECTON OF OUR SAINT.

When she was all ready to leave for Thonon, she received a note from our Blessed Father, who named S. Claude as the place of meeting. As it was on the eve of her departure, she went to the church of S. Bernard, to whom she had a peculiar devotion, to recommend her journey to him. While in this church, her vision of the gate of S. Claude came back to her mind with great clearness and consolation; and she left with much interior joy. There arrived a large party as well from Savoy as from Dijon at S. Claude, on the Festival

of S. Bartholomew, 1604. Immediately after the first salutation, our Blessed Father left his mother, Madame de Boissy, with Madame Brulart; and taking his beloved spiritual daughter aside, he begged her to relate all that had passed in her soul, which she did with such simplicity, perspicuity, and candour, as to forget nothing. The holy man listened to her with attention, and then left her without saying a word. Early on the morrow morning he came to her looking quite pale and faint: "Let us sit down, as I am quite weak and faint; I have not slept all night, having been engaged in your business. It is quite true that it is the will of God that I should undertake your spiritual guidance, and that you should follow my advice." The holy man was silent, and then lifting up his eyes to heaven: "Madam, what shall I say to you? but I must tell you, since such is the will of God; all your former vows are useless, and only a burden on your conscience; do not then be amazed at my delaying to give you an answer, for I wished to know the will of God, and only to act as He desired." "I heard the holy Prelate," said our Blessed Mother, "as if a voice from heaven had spoken to me, he seemed to be in an ecstasy, so thoroughly recollected was he; and spoke slowly, as if he felt great difficulty in speaking."

That very morning she made a general confession to our Blessed Father, who afterwards gave her a note, signed by himself, in which were written the following words: "I accept in the Name of God the charge of your spiritual guidance, and shall em-

ploy therein all the fidelity and care that I can, and as far as my ability and my other duties will allow me." Every one knew with what fidelity the saint fulfilled his promise, and with what obedience, submission, and perseverance our worthy mother followed his direction. She then took the vow of obedience to him, and sent it to him by writing, as we shall presently see. Our Blessed Father wrote for her a new method for spending the day, which is a mere sketch of the *Spiritual Directory*, which he afterwards drew up for our Congregation. He gave her a method of meditating every day of the week on one of the Sacred Wounds of our Lord, changed her manner of praying, which was too constrained and irksome, and set her at liberty to follow the will of God. "Oh God, what a happy day was that!" she used to say, "it seemed to me as if my soul was released from its interior captivity in which the advice of my first director had hitherto kept it."

From that day, which was the festival of S. Louis, she entered into the repose of the children of God in great interior liberty, and was drawn to a sort of prayer, altogether cordial and intimate; whereby she could say with the spouse of the Canticles: "I have found Him whom my soul hath so much desired. I sat down under His shadow whom I desired; and His fruit was sweet to my palate." Our Blessed Father heard that the maid of our Blessed Mother had said, that at whatever hour of the night she awoke she dressed herself, in order that when her mistress, who awoke early in the morning to pray,

should call her, she might be ready to attend her. The Bishop of Geneva censured our saint severely for this, gave her several interior practices of mortification, and said, "Your devotion should be such towards God, that none be inconvenienced; it is but reasonable that, since you wish to seek God, you should rise alone to find Him, without giving superfluous trouble to those who wait on you." She faithfully observed this advice, and from that time forward arose every morning, lighted her candle, during the winter, to read her point of meditation, after which she awoke her servants. This faithful servant of God, having engraved on the tablets of her heart the counsels of her new director, that she might practise them incessantly, returned to Dijon on the 28th of August, and the holy prelate went back to Savoy.

CHAPTER XVI.

HOW SHE MADE A VOW OF OBEDIENCE TO OUR BLESSED FATHER, AND HER TEMPTATIONS THEREON.

Never did a chaste and innocent bee return more contented to its hive, after having sucked the dew of heaven from the flowers, than this true widow when she returned from her happy journey. On the morrow after her arrival, she went to the church of Notre Dame de l'Etang, to return thanks to the Blessed Virgin. There she wrote and signed her vow as follows: "Lord, Almighty

and Eternal, I, Jane Frances Frémiot, though exceedingly unworthy of Thy Divine presence, trusting entirely in Thy infinite mercy and goodness, do vow to Thy Divine Majesty, in presence of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all Thy celestial and triumphant court, perpetual chastity, and obedience to the Lord Bishop of Geneva, saving the authority of all legitimate superiors. Humbly imploring Thy omnipotent love and mercy, to receive this holocaust through the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ; and as it hath pleased Thee to give me the grace to desire and offer it, may it also please Thee to give me sufficient grace to accomplish it. Amen. Written at Notre Dame de l'Etang, this 7th day of September, 1604."

After having placed her vows under the protection and guardianship of the Blessed Virgin, she sent it to our Blessed Father, and warned him how that roaring lion who goeth about prowling for prey, had again attacked her, as well on the choice of her director as against our Holy Faith. To which our Blessed Father made the following reply, dated 14 Oct., 1604. "Your selection of me as a director, has all the marks of a good and legitimate election; therefore do not doubt any more on that subject. That great movement of your spirit, which induced you by force, and yet with great peace of mind, and the reflection I gave to it before I consented, show that we have neither of us trusted to ourselves, but have used the judgment of your confessor, who is a good, learned, and pious man; we allowed the first agitations of your conscience to be calm, that we might see if

your uneasiness had been ill-founded; and that prayers, not of one day, but of several months, have preceded our decision, are infallible marks that it was the will of God." He adds lower down: "Do not, I pray you, dispute with the enemy; tell him boldly that it is God who has willed it and done it. You ask me for remedies for the temptations against the faith by which you are attacked. Do not argue with them; act like the children of Israël, who never tried to break the bones of the Paschal Lamb, but threw them into the fire." Acting on this advice, and several others which this holy bishop gave her, although she was severely tempted, yet she pretended not to perceive her enemy, and by perfectly despising his suggestions, she treated him with complete silence, as if she heard him not. Temptations against the faith now attacked her understanding, as if to entice her to a controversy; but being well counselled by her holy director in this spiritual war, she escaped by the gate of her will, and attacked the tempter in return. While her adversary was amusing himself in attacking the intellect, she threw herself at the feet of our Lord, without being able to say a word, but convinced that God would perceive by her humble position the aid she required. "Oh, my dear sister, (wrote our Blessed Father to her) it is a good sign that the enemy cries so much without; it is a sure proof that he is not within." In addition to the spiritual exercises which our Blessed Father had drawn up for her at S. Claude, she, moreover, desired that he would mark out an employment for each hour; but he said at the

conclusion of his letter, "The following is the general rule of our obedience; we must do everything by love, and nothing by force; we must rather love obedience than fear disobedience. I leave you liberty of spirit, and the permission to intermit your spiritual exercises for any just and charitable reason; let this be a species of obedience for you, and let such deficiencies be supplied by love. Remember the glorious festival of S. Louis, the day on which, at S. Claude, you plucked off the crown from your heart to lay it at the feet of Jesus our King; the day on which you renewed your youth like the eagle, by plunging into the sea of penance; the forerunner of the eternal day for your soul. Remember that to the generous resolutions you then made, of being all for God, in heart, soul, and spirit, I answered *Amen*, on the part of our mother the Church, and at the same time the Blessed Virgin and all the saints made the vaults of heaven re-echo with their Allelujah." Further on the saint says, "I pray you to bless God with me on the results of your voyage to S. Claude; I cannot calculate them all, but they are surely great."

The year 1604 came to an end, but the trials and temptations of our Blessed Mother were not yet concluded. On the contrary, they seemed to re-commence with the year 1605, especially those against faith; inasmuch as her generous soul, seeing the beauty and excellency of the resolutions she had made to attain unto perfection, ran after the prey with too great an ardour. The vicinity of that which is good excited her appetite, and

appetite an eagerness to satisfy her hunger, but in vain; for her master held her tied to the perch, and was unwilling to give her the use of her spiritual wings. In the meantime she lost her bodily strength by a continual palpitation of the heart, on which our Blessed Father gave her some advice, which concluded thus; "You remind me of that holy man Moses, who saw and yet did not live to enter into the Promised Land; you know that if you are to die without drinking of the water of the Samaritan, what matter, provided your soul be received to drink of the Eternal Source of life." The Blessed Mother, speaking of her trials, thus expressed herself: "When I imagined that I was somewhat at peace, I suddenly found myself engaged in a fresh struggle, and pressed with interior afflictions; my intellect was deprived of every means of assuaging my difficulties; and overwhelmed with a lively representation of all that could overwhelm it, I was ready to exclaim, 'My soul is sorrowful, even unto death.' I occasionally said, 'My Father, allow this chalice to pass away;' but as soon as I had said it I felt an ardent desire to drain the chalice even to the very dregs, and returned to say to our Lord, 'My God, grant me this mercy, that this chalice may not pass away until I have drank thereof!'" After several and different letters which our Blessed Father and she wrote about the commencement of 1605, it was agreed that she should follow the inspiration that God had given her to go into Savoy, to speak with her director, who promised to be

at the château de Sales at Whitsuntide. She had great difficulty in obtaining the permission of her father and father-in-law, and before leaving she obtained the episcopal benediction of the Bishop of Autun, with the permission to gain such indulgences she could in Savoy.

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW, ON HER FIRST JOURNEY TO SAVOY, SHE MADE A GENERAL CONFESSION TO OUR BLESSED FATHER.

She arrived at Sales on May 29th, and there met our Blessed Father. It was here that these great souls conversed at leisure of those things which might advance the kingdom of God in them. Our worthy mother re-made her general confession, and gave S. Francis an exact account of all her life, with such lights and extraordinary experiences of God, that the holy prelate was delighted; and at once seeing with the eyes of his spirit that this lovely soul was not only washed with hyssop, and become whiter than snow, but that the sweet river of grace gladdened from on high this city of God, said to her, "Oh, my daughter! my daughter! how it rains!" speaking of the state of grace in which her soul was. Our Blessed Mother, who was inebriated with the wine of the Holy Spirit, not observing the weather was clear and serene, believed that it was raining, and replied, "Let it rain, father, let it rain." Our Blessed Father smiled, without

her observing it, while she continued her discourse with astonishing fervour; and in conclusion she renewed her vows, and our Blessed Father thus spoke, as we have learned from her own mouth: "You then really wish to serve Jesus Christ?" "Yes;" replied our saint. "You dedicate yourself entirely to His pure love?" "Yes; in order that He may consume me and transform me into Himself." "Do you consecrate yourself to His service unreservedly?" "Yes; I consecrate myself to His service unreservedly." "Do you, then, despise the world as dung and dirt, to possess Jesus Christ and His grace?" "I despise it with my whole soul, and hold it in horror." "In conclusion, then, my child, you only wish for God?" "Yes!" replied she, "I only wish to have Him now and for all eternity." The voice of this chaste turtle-dove was, doubtless, most agreeable to the ears of her Divine Spouse, who caused her to enter still further into the cleft of the rock, nay, as it were, into the very inmost cavern of the perfect and interior life.

Our Blessed Father informed her that he had conceived some noble plan for her future life during the three hours that he had retired alone into a farm house, to wait for her. The Blessed Father also said, "A few years ago God imparted something to me, respecting a certain manner of life, but I shall say nothing of it for another year." She was submissive, and did not inquire into his meaning, only speaking to this holy prelate of her ardent desire to serve God, she said, "Oh, my

God! will you not, my father, snatch me from the world?" He replied in a serious manner; "Yes, you will one day leave everything; you will come to me, and I will divest you of all in the name of God." Our Blessed Mother thus spoke of this voyage: "The few days that I remained with the man of God, were indeed days of benediction; he dismissed me with the recommendation that I should always think of remaining a widow, because I had such an ardent desire to be a religious; however, my soul only desired to obey the will of God, which I wished to be taught by the holy man whom He had given me as a director. Amidst all my temptations God often vouchsafed to me an interior satisfaction at feeling myself bound by the advice of my director; and when it seemed as if God was abandoning me, I said, 'My Sovereign, I do not merit that Thou shouldest speak to me, but I firmly believe that in listening to Thy servant I hearken to Thy voice, and that it is Thou who speakest to me by that holy instrument.'" At another time, speaking of the high esteem in which she held our Blessed Father, she said, "I see that God dwells in this holy pastor with such plenitude, that I never look at him, as far as I know, without feeling the Divine Presence, and should be delighted to abandon everything to hold a humble situation in his household, in order that my soul may be fed with the words of life, which he daily utters." From this feeling of esteem arose her great obedience to all that our father ordered her; and not to forget it, she either wrote it of her own

accord, or was ordered to do so in a little book, which she had had bound expressly for the purpose.

After having spent ten days at Sales, and conversed at her leisure with the saintly prelate, she returned to Monthélon in Burgundy, where, though overwhelmed with her children's affairs, there shone forth in her a holy liberty of spirit altogether new, accompanied with great sweetness. Her devotions no longer inconvenienced any one, which caused our Blessed Father to be much applauded, as people recognized that God had raised him up to show that devotion was accessible to all. Her servants, as we were told by them, were wont to say, "The first director of Madame de Chantal made her pray thrice a day, and we were all much inconvenienced thereby; her present director, the Bishop of Geneva, makes her pray every hour, and yet none are inconvenienced thereby."

Two days after her arrival at Monthélon she began to regulate her exercises as her director had ordered. First of all, she rose at five o'clock in winter, and earlier in summer, and was as obedient at the first sound of her alarum as a religious to the sign of obedience; she rose alone, lighted her candle when she required it, went to her oratory, spent an hour in mental prayer, after which she dressed herself without fire, no matter how severe the weather. When her children were dressed, she taught them to pray to God, making them do their morning exercise as well as the servants, according to the directions of the Blessed Father.

She then visited her father-in-law, assisting him when he allowed her. She heard mass daily, and every Saturday had the sacrifice offered up in honour of our Lady, according to her vow. During the meals, only that which was holy and virtuous was spoken of; no matter who were present, her carpet-work was brought her as usual. She daily spent some portion of her time in teaching her own children to read, as well as those of the servant whom we have already mentioned. She instructed them daily, as well as the servant's children, and such of the domestics as could attend, in the catechism; and then read in private for about half an hour. Before supper she made a little spiritual collation, meditating on one of the Wounds of our Blessed Lord, and then said her rosary, which she did daily, according to a vow which she had made. In the evening, after supper, when there was no company, and her father-in-law was willing, she collected the whole household, and read an instruction on the commandments of God and the church, with advice on the practice of good morals and Christian piety. On her returning to her room she repeated with her children and her servants the Litany of our Lady, and a De Profundis for her husband, then each one made their private examination; after which they besought the benediction of their guardian-angel, saying, aloud and together, *In Manus tuas, &c;* she then gave holy water and her blessing to each of the children, who slept in separate beds, and never together; after which she remained half an hour in prayer, and always before going to bed she read a

little of the advice which her director had given her, and her point of meditation for the morrow.

Her interior occupation was the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ; and in order to remain near this Divine Saviour, she learned to imitate His virtues, and presented herself before the Eternal Father, trusting in the merits of His well-beloved Son, in union with whom she commenced and terminated all her prayers. She visited every morning, in spirit, the Holy Church, the Spouse of Jesus Christ, one of whose parts is triumphant in heaven, and that she saluted with delight. Another part is warring upon earth, and on its behalf she supplicated her Spouse to give her the victory over her enemies, to increase the number of the faithful, and to vouchsafe to herself the grace of dying as a good daughter of so holy a Mother. The third part is in purgatory, and to this she applied her suffrages, prayers, and indulgences. Her place of retreat was one of the Sacred Wounds. On Sunday she meditated on the Wound in the side; on Monday, on that of the left foot; on Tuesday, on that of the right foot; on Wednesday, on that of the left hand; on Thursday, on that of the right hand; on Friday, on the scars of His adorable Head; and on Saturday, on the Wound of the side, to finish the week as she had commenced. It was in this exercise on the Wounds of the Saviour, as she afterwards said, that she had vouchsafed to her a sight of God in everything, which she preserved through her life, and which kept her soul in a holy indifference, finding her Sole Good equally in all diversities of

creatures, of affairs, and events. To have a better idea of the maxims of the Gospel, she daily read the exposition of Father Ludolph, the Carthusian, otherwise called The Great Life of Christ. Her most favourite recreation was to sing spiritual songs; her chief delight was in the Psalms of David, translated into verse by Philippe Desportes, abbot of Tiron; she always had this book with her, even when she went into the country, and she carried it in a little bag on her saddle, in order to sing the praises of God.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF HER RULE AND HER CHARITY.

This faithful soul was not satisfied with following her Well-beloved in the exercises of the spiritual life, unless she gathered the myrrh of mortification, of which she had so perfumed her hands, that everything about her breathed its odour. She was exceedingly austere, and only allowed her body that which discretion forbade her refusing. She did all that was necessary herself, and her maids could not obtain permission to make her bed. She even swept her own room. She dressed as simply as she could, to show that she looked for nothing at the hands of the world, and that, like the alien of old, she was determined to marry the true Israëlite. She cut off her hair, which was very beautiful, and because she had formerly curled and powdered it, she now, by way of

revenge, threw it into the fire. She wore a black skirt, with a crape band, a cap of black taffeta, a veryesmall collar, without starch, short sleeves, about two fingers wide, a robe of coarse cloth, so simple, that it had no lace, and a petticoat of black serge, and she never used silk stockings.

The simplicity of her dress was equalled by that of her life. As she had been brought up delicately, she was not accustomed to several sorts of meat; but that she might learn to be totally indifferent as to what she ate, seeing that she was not permitted, on account of her delicate constitution, to fast, as her fervour made her desire, she commanded a good simple-minded woman, who was nurse to her children, to serve her at table. This good woman served her virtuous mistress according to her own appetite and taste, and God permitted that she should like things which our saint naturally detested; yet without saying a word, she ate of everything that was set before her, thus practising the highest point of holy abstinence that our Lord had recommended to His disciples; and this she observed with such holy dissimulation, that none of those who ate at her father-in-law's table perceived her abstinence. One of her servants, who was in her confidence, was wont to change her plate from time to time, reserving the fowl and venison that had been served to her mistress, for the poor. She fasted every Friday and Saturday; and often used the discipline and *catenella*, especially when she was much tempted.

But all her mortifications were nothing when

compared to the empire she had gained over her passions, by the daily practice of overcoming evil by good, opposing with meekness the insolence of the servant of whom we have above spoken. She overheard some of the servants saying that they would, at M. de Chantal's death, cut off this woman's nose, and drag her to the ditch; whereon this servant of God replied, "No, I shall be her defence; if God has used her as my cross, why should I wish her any ill?" She never permitted either her children or her attendants to tell her anything that this woman had said or done against her; and when it was suggested that it was unjust for this servant to manage the house for her father-in-law, she was wont to reply, "God has so ordered it, that I may have time for works of piety." She thus occupied every leisure hour; for this holy widow had no sooner given her heart to God to love Him ardently, than she gave all her time to the poor. From the very second year of her widowhood, until our congregation was cloistered, she was indeed the servant of the poor; and it is impossible for us to describe the thousandth part of what she performed in this exercise. The claim of her Sovereign Master to her service operated such a change in the heart of this young and delicate widow, that from the first she held in horror all that the world delighted in, and esteemed what it hated and repudiated. An admirable, but a true divorce! Her whole delight was to serve the poor, and especially those who were afflicted with the cancer, leprosy, and other similar diseases. Her perfume consisted

in pots of ointment, which she made herself, with exceeding great care, being convinced that in serving the poor she was serving Jesus Christ, and she often meditated on those words, "I was sick, and you visited Me." She had, as we have said, a small room, where she kept her ointments for the service of the poor. All was so neat, that it became quite proverbial in the country to say, when they wished to praise the neatness of a house, *Cela est propre et bien rangé comme la Boutique de Madame de Chantal!*

All those who were afflicted with cancer, leprosy, the itch, or other similar maladies, were wont to come from a distance to her for relief. They were most cordially received and carefully attended to, and, as she once acknowledged, the day that she felt the greatest *ennui* was that in which she found no occasion to exercise charity towards the poor. She washed the wounds with her own hands, took out the matter and the proud flesh, and dressed them with care and attention, occasionally doing this act of charity on her knees. Those who were in her service at that time have assured us that they have often seen her kiss the wounds of the poor, and apply her blessed lips to their sores, so as to make the bystanders shudder. She daily made the bed and cleaned the filth of the sick in the nearest village to Monthélon. The world, whose dim eyes were dazzled at this light, blamed her exceedingly for all that she did, saying that she would do better to remain with her father-in-law; but she humbly replied, that

she took nothing from the time which she legitimately owed her father-in-law, and besides that he has servants to wait on him, but this poor brother of Jesus Christ has no one if I should leave him.

After thus despising the contempt of the world she pursued her designs. She would on every Sunday and Festival take leave of her father-in-law, and go on foot to visit the sick in the parish, attended by two of her servants, not certainly without great mortification, lassitude, and inconvenience, for she did so both in the heat of summer and in the depth of winter; indeed, she always persevered in everything she undertook. Thus, on going to visit the sick she was wont to say to her servants, "We are going on a pilgrimage; let us go and visit our Lord on Mount Calvary, in the Garden of Olives, or the Sepulchre," thus diversifying the stations as subjects whereon she would converse. She was generally silent, or if not silent, would employ herself in reading and singing some of the Psalms of David, translated by the abbot of Tiron, Philippe Desportes. When she had arrived at the residence of these good villagers, she condoled with them to the best of her power, and gave them medicine and relief. Before leaving she made their beds. As soon as any one was taken ill in her neighbourhood, she was immediately informed of it, according to her request, so that she knew every one that was confined to their bed, as well as their complaint, and endeavoured to assuage their disease. The charitable courage of holy Tobias

had, it seemed, taken a fresh birth in this generous lady, for she washed and laid out with her own hands the bodies of all those who died in her parish. She remained as long as she could near the dying; but if they happened to expire during her absence she was immediately informed of it, as none would have dared to bury the deceased, that being, as they said, the right of "Madame la Sainte Baronne;" she asked them to grant her this favour as a compensation for her care of the sick. To bring the account of her day to a close, we must add, that she had a stock of clothes in reserve for the poor, and when any came to her in rags, and full of vermin, she made them wear the clothes that she had ready made, and taking their rags, she had them boiled, to destroy the vermin, and then mended them with her own hands. When their clothes had no vermin, but were only in rags, she was often seen with false sleeves and a white apron before her, laying these dresses on the table, and brushing them, after having mended them to render them fit to be worn.

CHAPTER XIX.

TWO REMARKABLE EXAMPLES OF HER INCOMPARABLE CHARITY IN SERVING THE SICK.

Not only did this Tabitha of our days order that she should be informed of those who were taken ill, but also that the poor who were found straying in the fields and lanes should be brought to her, feeling a special compassion for these poor creatures. The peasants were exceedingly faithful in obeying her wishes, and conducted a poor person to her dwelling as gladly as they would have taken a son to his father; and she received him with more true joy than a miser would hoard up his wealth, as her heart delighted in serving God in things that were most repugnant to nature. One day a good peasant, on his way home from the market at Autun, found near a tree a poor lad infected with the leprosy, and abandoned by all; the good man placed him on his mule, and hastened to conduct him to the Baroness, who gladly put him into the bed which she had ever ready for the use of the poor. There she waited on him, and having made a parcel of his rags, to clean them from the vermin, took the scissors, and with her own hand cut off his hair, and put oil on his diseased head, gave him a white night-cap, and then burnt his hair with her own hands, being unwilling that any of her servants should touch it. The length of time that this poor lad had lived without eating, re-

quired that he should be fed often, and little at a time; this charitable nurse of the poor fed him herself, and visited him three or four times a day, putting oil on his head, and cleaning his sores herself. When it happened that she was occupied with her father-in-law, or was otherwise engaged, she sent one of her servants with the food for her dear patient, who, not being so inured to mortification as her mistress, laid what she carried near his bed, and immediately left him, holding her nose all the time. We were told by this servant that the poor boy used to cry, saying, "When Madam comes she does not hold her nose, but sits near me, and instructs me how to save my soul; but when she can not come, I am abandoned by all." After she had done everything for this poor lad, it pleased God to call him hence, to be her friend in the eternal tabernacles. She watched by his bedside at night, and made him receive the last sacraments. When he was about to breathe his last, he turned round, and with clasped hands asked her blessing; she gave it, and embracing him, said, "Go, my child, with confidence in God. You shall be carried, with greater pomp than Lazarus, by the band of angels to the place of repose." Not satisfied with having served him while living, she hastened to wash and bury him; which being observed by a cousin of M. de Chantal, he wished to hinder her, observing, among other things, that he who, in the ancient law, touched a leper, was deemed unclean, and that this law had never been abolished, expressing also his anger and contempt

at her being so employed. She only replied, that since she had known what holy writ had said of our Lord, and that He had been seen in His passion as if He were a leper, she dreaded no other leprosy but that of sin. She then washed the body, laid it out, assisted at his interment, and prayed for the repose of his soul; while thus employed, she thought of that verse of the royal psalmist, "God lifteth up the poor from the dunghill, and placeth him with the princes of His people in the heavenly kingdom."

Our noble widow had scarcely paid the last duties to her dear guest, when God gave her a fresh opportunity of exercising her charity. There was in the neighbourhood of Monthélon a very handsome young woman, who, to please her husband, cut a wart that she had on her nose, but did it so badly that a cancer came on, which rendered her a disgusting object, whereon her husband, faithless to the conjugal vow, separated himself from her. When this poor creature found herself deserted, she had recourse to that charitable refuge where the poor were invariably succoured. The good baroness attended to her cancer, which was eating her countenance with great activity, visiting her three times a day; but as the cancer was exceedingly virulent, she could not prevent its progress, so that the sufferer became a frightful object. The poor creature was confined to her small room, deserted by all but our holy widow, who visited her daily for three years and a half, during which the cancer had destroyed her gums, and teeth, and had ascended as far as the ears, so that the face

had more the form of a death's head than a living face, excepting her eyes, which only made her look yet more hideous. The artifices used by her family to prevent her visiting this poor creature are scarcely credible ; they did not, however, succeed ; they even informed her father, M. Frémiot, of her conduct, accusing her of great imprudence.

This good father, who had never had any occasion to find fault with his beloved daughter, wrote her a severe letter, telling her that her devotion was not only indiscreet, but dishonourable to her relations, and prejudicial to her children, and finished his letter with the following words: "By the virtue of the authority and power which a father possesses over his daughter, I forbid your touching this woman ; if you have no thought for yourself, have some pity for those four lovely children whom God has left you, and of whom you must give account." This command deeply affected the virtuous widow. As she had persevered so long in waiting on this poor creature in a spirit of genuine devotion, and not through obstinacy, she discontinued through a spirit of self-denial and filial obedience, although she daily prepared all that was necessary for her, and carried it to her chamber, only abstaining from touching her, that alone being specified in her father's letter. This poor woman only lived about three weeks after that the widow ceased to dress her wounds ; it is true that she could not possibly have lived much longer. The cancer had so far eaten into her face, that

her jaw bones were detached, and she had a hole in her throat, by which this virtuous lady used to distil a little nourishment into the stomach with a sucking-bottle, which she had expressly made for the purpose. She was unable to speak, in consequence of this hole in her throat; whence it can be perceived that a truly superhuman courage was necessary in nursing this poor creature, who, finding herself on the point of death, regretted that she could not communicate. The charitable nurse thought also of this herself, and prevailed on the Curé to administer to her the Blessed Eucharist through the hole in her throat, with a pair of silver pincers that she had had made for the purpose, and the good creature died a Christian death about a quarter of an hour after this happy communion. She was scarcely buried, before a man was brought to her covered with the itch and boils, whom she kept and waited on for the space of ten months, when he died, and was buried by her.

We must here remark, that during the eight years which elapsed since her widowhood until the commencement of our congregation, besides the poor whom she served, and those whom she visited at their houses, she always had a poor person in her own apartment at her father-in-law's, for the continual exercise of her charity.

Here we must, while speaking of her love for the poor, relate an incident which occurred on the festival of the Holy Trinity, 1604. While she was walking in the evening, near the château, she met three young men, who asked alms of her for the

love of God: having nothing that she could give, except a ring that she had taken from her husband's finger after his death, and which she preserved from her great affection for the deceased, she handed it to one of the young men, begging him to use it for all three. They said to her that they were great friends, and that charity bestowed on one would do for all. While they were speaking she was seized with such a great sensation of the Divine Presence, that, casting herself at their feet, she kissed them, which they allowed her to do. On rising up they bade her adieu, and she never could find out whence they had come or whither they had gone. But ever since that her soul became so inflamed with love for the poor, that she made a vow never to refuse alms to any when asked for the love of God. God's hand not being shortened, He might have conferred in these three poor men the same favour on His servant that He had done to Abraham in the valley of Mambre.

CHAPTER XX.

HOW SHE DESIRED, THROUGH A FEELING OF REVERENCE, TO SPIN THE CLOTHES OF OUR BLESSED FATHER; AND HOW SHE WAS CURED OF AN ILLNESS.

Not only was this great servant of God occupied in exalted matters, but her fingers turned the spindle; for besides working for the poor and for the churches which were in her neighbourhood,

she was inspired to spin a piece of serge for a cassock for our Blessed Father, hoping that in future she would be allowed to spin all that he required. She sent him this piece of serge, when it had been dyed violet, as a New Year's Gift, in 1606, requesting the holy prelate to give the value of her work to the poor: whereon he replied, "Yes, my dear daughter, I highly approve of your working, when you are not occupied in anything more particular, and let your work be for the altars or the poor; but do not be so strict as to consider that if you are required to do anything for yourself or your children, you must give the value of what you do to the poor; it is right that you should always exercise your holy liberty. You must know that I have heartily laughed at your wish for me to give the value of your serge to the poor; for who shall I get to value it? for if I should give the value according to my own estimation, I should give more than I possess. No cassock has kept me so warm as this, the heat of which will go to my heart; and I do not think that it is violet, but purple, or scarlet, since it is dyed with charity. But let this be the only time for thus acting, for know that I do not have cossocks every year, but only when I want them; for the following years we shall find means in using your work as you desire."

After this our Blessed Father taught this holy work-woman to work with a mystical spindle, making her place, like the sacred shepherdess of the canticles, the cross of our Lord on her left side,

and to consider that the wool of the innocent Lamb Jesus was there preciously gathered up, that is, His merits, His example, and the mysteries of His Holy Cross. She continually worked with this holy spindle, by considerations, aspirations, and meditations ; and by a careful imitation of the Son of God, she drew into the bobbin of her heart all this white and delicate wool. As our Blessed Father had foretold, she thus manufactured a dress which defended her from the cold and snow of a thousand temptations, during her life, and in the day of her death. "Work your spindle, not with large bobbins, for your fingers cannot handle them, but with patience, self-denial, mildness, resignation, simplicity, and love for the poor." Commencing, then, afresh to spin the wool of the Divine Lamb, our Blessed Father permitted her to partake oftener of the Holy Communion in the year 1606, namely, every Thursday, besides Sundays and festivals.

At the vintage season our holy widow returned to her château of Bourbilly ; the dysentery was then very prevalent. Our good vintager left the vine harvest to her labourers, only going to visit the poor, thereby seeking for her Divine Spouse, and being delighted at being at perfect liberty. Never was a Sister of Charity more holily occupied. Every morning before sunrise, and after having spent an hour in mental prayer, she visited the poor, taking them all that was requisite for their illness, and cleaning their rooms ; she then assisted at mass, and breakfasted, after which she would visit those of her poor who lived at a dis-

tance. In the evening she again visited those who were sick in the village ; and on her return home received the account of the vintage from her steward, having her eye on everything ; and yet her devotions did not render her less vigilant in watching over the affairs of her children. She was often called after she had retired to her oratory to attend the dying, when she used to spend half the night on her knees near their beds, either praying for them, or exhorting them, or waiting on them. During the six weeks of her residence at Bourbilly, her attendants have assured us that she never spent a day without washing and laying out three or four bodies ; this disease being exceedingly fatal. Her spirit was ready, but her flesh was weak and infirm, and at last yielded.

After having served others, she was herself attacked with the dysentery and fever, and so sick, that it was believed she was about to die. Believing that her last hour was at hand, she wrote to her father-in-law, begging his pardon, and recommending her orphan children to his protection. The poor old man was extremely afflicted at this intelligence, and all her family were so affected, that they were unable to console one another ; for though our Blessed Mother had suffered much while residing with her father-in-law, it was only from the insolence of one person ; all the others regarded her as a saint ; but God ever permits a Semei to persecute those who walk according to His heart. As our patient was one night extremely ill, she was inspired to make a vow to the Blessed Virgin ; and being in the

morning perfectly cured, she placed her household in order, and started for Monthélon, to console her children, who had wept bitterly since her illness, and to comfort her father-in-law. On her way from Bourbilly to Monthélon, she met a poor lady with her son begging; she took them with her, and asked permission of her father-in-law to lodge them, which he granted, as he had often done before, although in an ill humour; but this depended on the state of mind his servant woman chose to put him in. She took care of this lady, and rescued her from heresy, and also obtained permission to keep the child at her house.

CHAPTER XXI.

OF HER SECOND JOURNEY INTO SAVOY, WHERE OUR BLESSED FATHER DETERMINED AS TO HER FUTURE LIFE.

Although this faithful servant was ever occupied in doing something remarkable in the service of God and her neighbour, yet all this appeared as nothing, unless she gave herself up to the service of God in a life altogether retired, and out of the world; and because our Blessed Father had commanded her only to live holily in her state as a widow, she felt very scrupulous at seeing herself still tormented by a desire of being a religious. She wrote to our Blessed Father, saying, "Do you think that I shall one day quit every-

thing to follow our good God? Do not, I pray you, take this darling hope from me." Our Blessed Father thus replied to her, "You fear having acted against your vow of obedience, finding yourself drawn towards the religious state; but no! I have not told you that you shall have no hope, but that you should not amuse yourself therewith; for there is nothing that is a greater hindrance to our perfection in our vocation than aspiring to another state; the children of Israel could not sing in Babylon, because they thought of their own country. But for myself I wish that we should sing everywhere. I see that your desire of being a religious has always been great; but, O sweet Jesus, what shall I say to you, my very dear daughter? His goodness knows that I have often implored His grace at the Holy Sacrifice, and elsewhere, for you; and not only that, but I have engaged others, whose prayers are better than mine, to pray for you, and what have I learnt as yet? that you must one day, my child, quit everything; that is, in order that you may understand, I find that I must one day counsel you to quit everything; I say everything, but I know not if it be to enter into religion, and as yet I cannot see my way clearly; and know that in this matter I am more indifferent about my own will, in order to know that of God, than I have ever been before; nevertheless, the *yes* is not yet in my heart, and the *no* is still decidedly there; but give me more time to pray, as the matter is of great importance, and besides,

before I can resolve, it is necessary that we should see each other."

Our Blessed Mother, speaking in confidence of these words of our holy Founder, thus expressed herself: "The hope which this holy prelate gave me of one day quitting the world, was a subject of great consolation to me; and I endeavoured, as far as it lay in my power, to dispose my heart according to his advice, although my temptations did not pass away; I resigned myself in the hands of God as my holy director had bidden me, offering Him the remainder of my days, and supplicating Him to employ them as it pleased Him, no longer teazing myself with the vain promise of the tranquillity and merit consequent on entering religion; but I did all in my power to offer Him my heart, void of all other affections except His pure and chaste love, and the desire of obeying Him." As our Blessed Father had written, saying that another interview was absolutely necessary before coming to a final resolution, she went to Annecy on the festival of Whitsuntide, 1607, to receive the Holy Sacrament from the hands of such a great apostolical pastor, as Francis de Sales. Speaking of this journey to one who had her confidence, she said, "I went to see this saintly prelate with the greatest indifference imaginable, without any other wish than that of faithfully observing all that God should order through his instrumentality, with a firm assurance that it would be in accordance with His divine will, to which alone I was deeply attached. I arrived about four or five days before

Whitsunday, during which time he spoke with me a great deal, making me give him an account of all that had passed in my soul, without informing me of his design, but only telling me to pray fervently to God, and to place myself entirely in His hands, which I endeavoured to do."

Our Blessed Father left her in this state until the Monday within the Octave of Pentecost, when, perceiving that the heart of this true widow had been so long emptied of all other affection except that of being entirely with God, he filled it with the salutary oil of consolation. Having sent for her after mass, he said to her with a serious and grave countenance, and with a tone bespeaking a mind lost in God, "Well, my daughter, I have determined what to do with you.' —"And I, my Lord and Father, am equally resolved to obey you." On this she knelt down. The prelate allowed her to do so, and standing about two paces from her, he began the following conversation; "Now rise; you must enter the order of S. Clare." "Father, I am quite ready." "No, you are too delicate for them, you must become a sister at the hospital at Beaune." "Whatever you please." "No, nor yet that; I wish you to become a Carmelitess." "I am quite ready to obey you." He then proposed to her several other orders, in order to try her obedience, and he found that she was as a piece of wax softened by the Divine heat, and ready to receive any form of religious life that he might be pleased to impose on her. At last he

told her that such was not God's intention respecting her, and then unfolded to her his plan of our beloved institute. "At this proposition," says our Blessed Mother, "I felt an immediate interior acquiescence, with a sweet satisfaction, that assured me that such was the will of God, which I did not feel as regards the other propositions, though my soul was entirely ready to obey him."

Now our Blessed Father was so firm in his plan of commencing our little congregation, that his resolution was unalterable, from the certainty that God had given him, that it was the design and work of His Divine Majesty; and he said to our Blessed Mother and Foundress, "We must have courage, my daughter, for everything tends to confirm me in my plan; I see great difficulties in the way of its execution, and as yet no way to extricate myself therefrom, but I feel assured that Divine Providence will do so by means unknown to us." Two things especially seemed insurmountable to this holy prelate; one was the rescuing our Blessed Mother from the many bands which tied her to the world, her father and father-in-law, both of whom were very aged, and the guardianship of four very young children; the other was the establishing the first house of the Institute at Annecy, where God had shown him the source of a fountain of sweet water, little in its commencement, but which produced several beautiful and large rivulets. "I fully agreed," said our Blessed Mother, "with our holy Founder in believing that I should meet with no little difficulty in separating from my relations, but I clearly saw that it was essentially

necessary that the new vine, being planted in the church, should be in the vicinity of its blessed planter, in order that he might be able daily to plant, and pluck out, all that the Divine Father should make known to him, and he said to me one day, while we were walking together, 'The more I think of it, the more am I resolved to plant the germ of our congregation at our little Annecy, for it will be a tree that will extend its branches over the whole world; it is but right, therefore, that it should take root among our mountains.'" This holy prelate had formed great designs for this work, but he left it entirely in the hands of the Divine Providence, waiting quietly until the Divine Wisdom should prepare everything for the work; as was done, as we shall shortly see, in a manner not to be foreseen by human prudence.

CHAPTER XXII.

PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE BETWEEN MADAME DE CHANTAL AND M. LE BARON DE THORENS, AND OF THE DEATH OF OUR BLESSED FATHER'S YOUNGEST SISTER.

Our holy founder and foundress had no idea of executing their plan respecting our institute for at least six or seven years, on account of the tender age of our Blessed Mother's three younger daughters; but it happened that on the festival of Corpus Christi, this holy widow, on returning from the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, and being very tired, wished to rest herself in her

bed-room, until our Blessed Father, who carried the Blessed Sacrament, was ready for dinner. As several gentlemen who were present saw her ascending the stairs, they came forward to see her; she thanked them for their kindness, but seeing that the Baron de Thorens, brother to our Blessed Father, still continued to follow her; "Really," said she, smiling, "I should be glad to have this gentleman as a member of my family." She said this with all simplicity, being much attached to all the relatives of our Blessed Father. Nevertheless these words were overheard, and repeated to Madame de Boissy, the mother of our holy Founder, who instantly requested her son to have an explanation with our Blessed Mother, as she had a great desire that her son, M. le Baron de Thorens, should marry Mademoiselle de Chantal, our saint's eldest daughter; and she gave no rest to our Blessed Father, until he promised to bring the matter forward. Our Blessed Father had a natural repugnance to speak of such matters, but he never had the heart to refuse his good mother. He commenced by saying what delight such an event would give his mother. "Never," said our Blessed Mother, "was I so amazed as at this proposal, since I foresaw several obstacles to the accomplishment of this marriage." Nevertheless, she did not manifest her astonishment, but evinced great gratitude to Madame de Boissy, who wished her to give her consent; but this she refused, foreseeing how it would annoy the child's grandfathers for her to leave France.

During the time of our saint's stay at Annecy, several ladies, the spiritual children of our holy prelate, came to see her, and returned much edified. Others, however, came through curiosity, knowing that she was a member of a good family ; she was exceedingly reserved towards those who were at all worldly, and spoke with such effect of the misery to which worldly-mindedness leads us, that several, on their return home, dressed with more decency and modesty ; others again took off their ear-rings, and wore them no longer, and we know that some of them would not even permit their daughters to wear them, nor to use powder, or even to go to balls, so efficaciously did this holy widow speak to them.

It now became necessary for her to return home after so long a visit, and she did so after the octave of Corpus Christi, delighted at knowing the vocation to which Heaven had called her. She had intended to take with her our Holy Father's youngest sister, who was at Puy-d' Orbe, and had she waited for her, she would have been detained for several months longer. This young lady was the first infant whom our Blessed Father had baptized ; he was her spiritual father, and loved her much, saying that he hoped to do something with her for the service of God. All this rendered her infinitely dear to our Blessed Mother ; she honoured her as her sister, and loved her as her own child. God, who is pleased to put to death in order to quicken, struck Mademoiselle de Thorens with a fever and dysentery. It would be superfluous to speak of the attention of our Blessed

Mother to this young lady, but suffice it to say, she fell a victim to death at the early age of fifteen, on the 8th of Oct. 1607. At the time of this event, which afflicted our Blessed Mother more than we can express, God inspired her with the wish of giving one of her daughters to the house of Sales, in the place of her who had just died, before whom she made a vow to that effect on her knees: "While I pronounced the words, Almighty God gave me great consolation, and showed me that my giving one of my daughters to the house of Sales was the means that He had chosen to facilitate my retreat to Savoy, and to serve me for a pretext." She washed the body of this young damsel as much with her tears as with water, and after having done all in her power, she informed our Blessed Father of her decease. He wrote her a very beautiful letter on the subject, and among other things he censured her for having offered her life to God, and that of one of her daughter's, in exchange for the deceased: "My child," said he, "we must not only consent that God should strike us, but we must also acquiesce as to the justice of His blow, no matter where it fall. If David offered his life for that of his son Absalom, it was because if he died he would be lost. I am delighted at seeing you love God so earnestly, for what good are lukewarm hearts? But it is essentially necessary that you should meditate once a week on loving the will of God more than anything else, and that not only in things that are supportable, but those that are insupportable." As soon as our Blessed Mother received this counsel, she

undertook the exercise of the love of the will of God, and wrote the following in her "Manual," to read it daily morning and evening: "O Lord Jesus, I have no longer any choice; strike whatever chord of my lute pleaseth Thee, and it will for ever re-echo the same harmony: yes, Lord Jesus, without any *ifs*, without any *buts*, without exception, Thy will be done respecting my father, my children, myself, and everything connected with me."

Now as she was convinced that it was the will of God that she should give one of her daughters to the house of Sales, she immediately informed her parents of it, and went herself to Dijon to tell her father of her excessive grief at the death of Mademoiselle de Sales, and that she had made a vow of giving one of her daughters to that house. "My good father," said she, "was much astonished at this news, and adduced several reasons against my proposition; nevertheless, God gave me grace to keep to my determination, so that he assented to it, and reflected on the honour and happiness which it would be to our family to be allied to that of our Blessed Father, whom he honoured as a true man of God." This prudent woman, to arrange the affair, obtained a letter from her father to the holy prelate, wherein he expressed his delight at the vow made by our Blessed Mother, adding, "But I must, my lord, confess that my daughter (the Baroness de Chantal) alone would have induced me to resign this child."

Though the President Frémiot was gained, yet

all was not done. The relations on her husband's side were yet more difficult to win over; they were not acquainted with our Blessed Father, and at once refused to let her send her dear daughter to Savoy, and to form so distinct a connexion. Nevertheless God endowed her words with such persuasion, that she gradually won them all, but she was obliged to exercise much patience, as two years elapsed before this marriage was arranged; it is true that she waited until her daughter was eleven before she married her. This delay was so exceedingly distressing to Madame de Boissy, that our Blessed Father wrote thus to our Holy Mother: "I assure you that my mother is so impatient to become the mother of the daughter you have given her, that I should be exceedingly restless if I did not remember that the edifice at which I was working was to establish my soul in a state of constant peace. God is my witness how earnestly I desired to have this sister-in-law, and how dear she will be to me; now I will not think that she will be my sister-in-law, she will be more than my sister, nay, more than daughter to me; but it is necessary to be quick in the matter."

In October 1608, our Blessed Father and M. de Thorens went into Burgundy to see Madame de Chantal, and her relations, who were then indeed delighted at this connexion; and in the February following the marriage contract was signed, which was a source of great joy to our Blessed Mother. But God, who desired that this joy should be intermingled with sorrow, permitted the enemy to attack her with some violent temptations against

the choice which her Blessed Father had made of her vocation. "O God," said she once, "how severe was this shock! And I had no other remedy than to take up the cross of our Lord, and I said to myself, 'Daughter of little faith, what fearest thou? what dost thou apprehend? I am walking in the winds and the waves, but I am with Jesus Christ.'" She wrote to our Blessed Father, who replied that she had nothing to fear, for while she held the cross in her hands, the enemy would be under her feet.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OF HER THIRD JOURNEY TO SAVOY, AND HER REPUGNANCE TO RE-ENTER THE WORLD.

It often happens that the malice of the wicked divulges the good actions of the just. The servant who had such influence over M. de Chantal, was irritated at our saint marrying her daughter so young, as she could not keep a promise she had made to a gentleman to favour his suit with the grandfather of the child; and on the contract being signed with M. de Thorens, she so excited the old man, out of a spirit of revenge, against his daughter-in-law, that he sent a messenger express to Dijon to complain to her father; he wrote to his daughter of the complaints that he had heard of her, and she was obliged to tell him something of what she had suffered during the seven years that she had resided with her father-

in-law. The good president was so affected by his daughter's virtue, who had never even hinted at her sufferings, that he passed a sleepless night, and sent her at dawn an express messenger, with an exceedingly affectionate letter, censuring her for having concealed her sufferings, and desiring her to leave her father-in-law, which she modestly excused herself from doing. She, however, took advantage of this opportunity to obtain their consent to pass the coming Lent at Annecy, on the pretext that Madame de Boissy desired to see her daughter, who was plighted in troth to the Baron de Thorens; but her real reason was to settle the time for the opening of our establishment, and to hear the Lent sermons which our Blessed Father intended to preach to his dear people at Annecy.

She arrived in this town in the first week in Lent, 1609, bringing with her her eldest and second daughters. They were so well brought up that every one desired to make their acquaintance. Madame de Boissy was so pleased with her daughter-in-law, that she wished to keep her with her, but it was not expedient. During her stay at Annecy, our saint was exceedingly useful to several ladies, the spiritual daughters of our Blessed Father. She assiduously assisted at all the offices in the Cathedral, and was like another S. Monica, always in the church of this great S. Ambrose of his age. We need hardly say that she lost none of his sermons or exhortations; she was also extremely assiduous at the exercises, stations, and other devotions,

of all the confraternities of the town, of which there were a great number. On Maunday Thursday, dressed in white, and veiled like the other penitent sisters of the Holy Cross, she assisted at the general procession which was made through all the churches of the city to visit the Blessed Sacrament there exposed. It commenced at 10 P. M., after a sermon. The holy widow, in order to follow our Saviour through this night of suffering with pain as well as with devotion, on taking her habit of penance, went bare-footed. On the morrow she renewed her vows in the hands of our Blessed Father, and thus wrote the renewal on the anniversary of our Saviour's death, 1609. "I renew my vows with a fresh and incomparable affection, wishing to die to myself and all things for ever, to live in obedience to the Divine Will, to which I consecrate myself absolutely and unreservedly, to be obedient in everything to the Lord Bishop of Geneva, my very good spiritual Father; and in like manner as my Saviour shall aid me with His grace, and receive me with all my heart, so do I give myself to Him. Amen. Jane Frances Frémiot."

The festival of Easter being over, and the saintly prelate having given his people the nosegay of devotion, the pious widow placed it in the vase of her heart; then all her final resolutions having been taken, as well for the marriage of Madame de Chantal as for the commencement of our establishment, she returned to Burgundy, having bidden adieu to Madame de Boissy, who died

shortly after, before the wished-for union could be effected. Our Blessed Mother was received on her arrival at Dijon with great joy by her father, who regarding our holy founder as a saint, thus wrote to him: "I delight in conversing with my daughter, Madame de Chantal, for she nourishes my soul with the heavenly honey gathered while with you."

She was instrumental, during her stay at Dijon, in gaining many by her pious conversation to the devout life. She had nothing to do with any temporal matters, save those connected with her children and the poor, whose advocate she was; she had generally a great quantity of papers with her belonging to these good villagers, on which she was wont to consult her father. But she was not long tranquil at her father's, as her relations were importunate in advancing the suit of a gentleman whom she had often refused, but who, supported by her relations, did all in his power to obtain her consent. He was a nobleman extremely rich, and a widower; they, moreover, proposed a marriage between their children, which would have been highly advantageous to the family of Madame de Chantal. Those who were dazzled by wealth, seeing that this chaste widow refused these propositions, and that she assured them that she had sworn an eternal divorce with the world, censured her much, as indiscreet, adding such malicious calumnies, that I will not defile this paper with them; but our holy widow despised them. She wrote to our Blessed Father of the persecution which she suffered, and he thus replied: "Who,

my daughter, are those rash persons who wish to bruise that fair dove, the love of widowhood? do they not fear the cherubim who hover here and there, keeping her under the shadow of their wings? Alas! you say, I am tormented in order to give satisfaction to my good father; know, then, that you must leave them alone, and you will see that God will know how to take care of the father without causing the daughter to be lost. This is well said. S. Agatha, S. Tecla, S. Agnes, suffered death rather than lose the lily of their chastity, and they wish to frighten you with shadows, but all this is nothing for your solid courage."

This Blessed Mother thus spoke of this period: "I suffered quite a martyrdom from seeing this nobleman so determined, as he was a great friend of my father's, who was much offended with me. I wished much to have been with my father-in-law; all the persecution that I had suffered seemed to be roses compared to these thorns. I kept as close as I could to the Holy Cross, fearing that the voices of so many charmers would make my heart rest in some human complacency."

The enemy had now besieged this firm tower of David for the space of eight years; but being in this attack aided by her parents, he so redoubled his assaults, that the poor widow dreaded a defeat in such a rude war. However, like the generous Sulamite, desiring to defeat her enemy, she raised a miraculous standard on the turret of her stronghold, for with her own hands she engraved the holy name of Jesus on her heart;

we know not with what instrument, but the mark remained during her life, and that so deeply, that she could not stanch the blood which oozed from this blessed wound; a wound of a truly solid and faithful love. With this blood she wrote fresh vows and promises to God, consecrating herself to the sole and pure love of His Majesty. Her heart, sealed with His divine seal, was strengthened with fresh strength to oppose the furies of the world and hell. Our Blessed Father wrote to her often, and said to her among other things, "Oh, my dear child! the life we have chosen seems to me daily more and more desirable, and that our Lord will be thereby greatly served. I see, however, many and great difficulties in our way, but believing that God wills it, I am not in the slightest degree alarmed. No! let the world do all it pleases, I am not in any fear, for I have borne you on the knees of our Lady, as Bala on the knees of the lovely Rachel; she has taken you for her own; as for myself, I have no longer the care of it."

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOW SHE TOLD HER FATHER OF HER INTENTION TO LEAVE THE WORLD.

This faithful Israelite only aspired to leave the Egypt of the world, which tyrannized over her. She daily desired to find a convenient hour when she might speak with her father: the glori-

ous S. John furnished her with this opportunity on his festival, every one having gone to see the bonfires and rejoicings which take place that day. "When I saw my father alone," said she, "I felt great reluctance to enter his room, knowing how grieved he would be at my proposition. I knelt down, and invoked the Divine assistance with all my heart." She then commenced by preparing her father gradually for the shock, saying that she felt extremely the bringing up her daughters with her father-in-law, because his house was not conducted as she would desire. The president immediately replied, "That she should not be troubled at that, as her eldest daughter, as soon as she was married to the Baron de Thorens, would be given up to Madame de Boissy, who so earnestly desired it; the two younger should be placed at the Ursulines, and thus prepare a cloister in their hearts, if God had prepared their hearts for the cloister; and that as to her son, the Baron de Chantal, he would take care of him. "God having thus inspired my father," said our Blessed Mother, "I immediately replied in a state of great excitement, 'Do not, my dear father, be annoyed at my telling you that I now find myself liberated, by your reply, to follow the divine vocation to which God has called me, to retire from the world, and to consecrate myself to the divine service.'"

As soon as the venerable old man, who was more than seventy, heard this news, he commenced weeping bitterly, and remonstrating in such affectionate terms with his beloved daughter, that if God had not given her strength, she would have

yielded, and, as she herself acknowledged, her father's sorrow was perfect martyrdom to her. To pacify his grief, she told him that she had spoken to him in perfect confidence as to her father, that nothing was yet done, but that she had felt herself obliged in conscience to manifest to those who could best counsel her, the things with which she felt herself inspired. This satisfied and appeased M. Frémiot. On seeing this, she added, that she had already consulted with the bishop of Geneva on the subject, and that she must act conscientiously. On this her father, after offering up a mental ejaculation, replied, "I must confess that the bishop of Geneva has the spirit of God; I must, however, make one request, that you do nothing till I have first consulted the good prelate." She willingly gave the required promise, and added, that she had confidence in God, that His will would be made known to them, and that she would willingly do all that he, the bishop of Geneva, should order her. This concession on her part enchanted her father, and he was set at perfect ease.

The holy widow, overjoyed at having thus broken the ice, now made preparations to return to Monthélon, to confer with her father-in-law. On her arrival, she did all she could to gain over by a holy and charitable prudence, those from whom she foresaw she would have the most opposition, and to place all her affairs in proper train. No one can conceive the anxiety she displayed, during the nine years of her widowhood, in arranging all law-suits, paying her debts, and set-

ting to rights the affairs of her children. She had often with her those who aspired to become Carmelites; and extraordinary to say, from 1607 she had become very intimate with our very honoured sister, M. Jeanne Charlotte de Bréchard. On her return from Savoy, these devout maidens were accustomed to practise religious exercises, such as psalmody, silence, and the like. She engaged all her friends to pray for her intention, that it might please our Lord to enable her parents to acquiesce in her retreat; and hearing that her father and her brother, the Archbishop of Bourges, purposed spending the vacation at Totes, one of their lordships in Lausois, she went to meet them there. The Archbishop of Bourges, who loved her dearly, said that she ought not to think of leaving them. Her father conversed with her more at leisure, and with great affection he told her that he had thought deeply of her proposition, and that it was his settled opinion that she was exceedingly wrong in thinking of any other life than that which she now led, and that she must be satisfied with the liberty she enjoyed in living as devoutly as she pleased in her state of widowhood. She listened quietly to all his reasons without appearing at all astonished, but simply told him that she only sought to obey the will of God in all this matter, and that she could not do less than speak of her inspirations to those who were capable of judging of them, and aiding her to follow them.

The Blessed Mother thus spoke of this circumstance: "My good father's love, as well as his diligence in proving this to me texts from Holy

Scripture, affected me deeply, and this enabled me to pray yet more devoutly to our Lord. It pleased His divine goodness one morning to make known to me by a supernatural light that the devil was malicious enough to use as his instrument my father's affection, and was also making me feel more tenderly than ever to him and my children. At the same time this good God inspired me with the following words as my defence: 'If I please men, I shall not be the servant of Jesus Christ;' and rather than not serve Jesus Christ, I would willingly lose heaven, earth, men, angels, and myself; and so earnestly did my soul seek after God, and this desire of finding God and doing His will kept my heart in such a state, that I could not dissimulate. My father fully perceived this; he commanded the Archbishop of Bourges to divert me from my intention, a task which he readily undertook; but as I spoke to him as a sister, and not as a child, I told him plainly that I could not betray my soul, telling him that it was not the effect of imagination, but that it came from God; that I could not regard the voice of the bishop as that of a hireling; and, lastly, that I sought to do the will of God alone; that although I so earnestly desired to leave the world, still, if the bishop of Geneva ordered me to remain in the world as a widow, I should do so; nay, if he ordered me to stand on a pillar like S. Simeon Stylites, for the rest of my life, I should willingly do so; and that I desired no condition or kind of life but obedience to the will of God. This manner of speaking touched the good Arch-

bishop of Bourges deeply; he acquainted my father with all that I had said; and my father promised to take it into consideration; and they did not again mention the subject to me, nor I to them, only we all waited anxiously the arrival of our Blessed Father."

CHAPTER XXV.

HOW OUR BLESSED FATHER BLESSED THE MARRIAGE OF M. LE BARON DE THORENS AND MADEMOISELLE DE CHANTAL, AND OBTAINED PERMISSION FOR OUR BLESSED MOTHER TO RETIRE FROM THE WORLD.

On the 13th of October, 1609, her relatives assembled at Monthélon, and our holy Father blessed the marriage of M. le Baron de Thorens with Mademoiselle de Chantal, who was only between eleven and twelve years old. Her good mother, who ardently desired to be united to her immortal spouse, so managed, that on the morrow after the wedding, our Blessed Father, M. Frémiot, and the Archbishop of Bourges should be left alone, in order that they might confer together on the subject of her retreat. This they did for some time, and during this period she was in deep prayer, that it might please God to make her father and brother susceptible of the holy reasons which our Blessed Father might allege. Her prayer was heard. After a long conference they sent for her. She appeared with great courage before her judges, who were

to give a definitive sentence respecting the remainder of her life. M. Frémiot and the Archbishop of Bourges asked her several questions, to which she replied; and she solved them with such determination, that they clearly saw that this just woman could never be shaken, and that her mouth spoke wisdom. She told them, among other things, that when, like her, they only had God in view, they would have numberless reasons to approve of her designs; she then told them of all the favours that she had received from God, and how she had been governed since the commencement of her widowhood. During the time that she was speaking our Blessed Father said not a word, but admired the wisdom and generosity of this holy woman, who, after having replied to all their objections, told them how she had managed the affairs of her children, and had left them without lawsuits and debts, as well as the marriage of her daughter, which had just taken place. The president, on hearing this, could not help exclaiming, "She hath looked well to the paths of her house, and hath not eaten her bread idle."

The Archbishop of Bourges did not know what to reply; both concluded that it was the work of God, and no longer offered any opposition. Our Blessed Father, who was delighted at seeing the effects of grace in their hearts, continued to be silent, while they were speaking among themselves. There was yet one more difficulty to be overcome, which had not been mentioned so far, and which was by no means one of the least, namely, in

what town she should commence her congregation. M. Frémiot wished it to be at Dijon, the Archbishop of Bourges wished for either Autun or Bourges, as his sister might then superintend the affairs of her children; and here our Lord especially assisted His servant, for she told them that, seeing her married daughter was so young, she thought it her duty to make her retreat in her neighbourhood, that is, at Annecy; that her presence was necessary to superintend her household affairs; that her new life would leave her some little time, during a short period, when she could superintend her children; and that, besides this, she would educate her children near her. M. Frémiot and the Archbishop of Bourges willingly gave their consent to her proposition. Our Blessed Father, seeing everything so propitious, laid before them the plan of our congregation, and promised them, that for a few years she who had offered herself to God as the first mother of this little congregation, might occasionally go to Burgundy, if it was necessary, for the benefit of her children. This delighted them much; and seeing that the holy prelate followed the footsteps of our Lord, and prepared everything with such mildness, they gave their full consent to these propositions, and on separating blessed God for so holy an enterprise.

On the morrow of this happy conclusion our Blessed Mother, desiring to strike the iron while it was hot, begged them to fix a time for its execution. It was decided that she might retire in six weeks or two months, so well regulated were all her

affairs ; and this decision consoled her more than we can say. She begged her father to break her resolution to her father-in-law, M. de Chantal, who was deeply affected, and cried so bitterly, (he being more than eighty years of age) that M. Frémiot said that she must delay putting her project into execution, as he could not allow her to cause such deep affliction to the venerable old man ; whereon she replied : " The resolutions, my dear father, taken for the service of God, can suffer no delay ; I shall take care to win over my father-in-law ;" in which she ultimately succeeded.

The Sunday having come, she ordered all her household to confess to our Blessed Father, and receive the Holy Communion from his hands, having got him to say the Parochial mass, and to make an exhortation, when he was instrumental in effecting the conversion of a young debauchee, who was regarded as an atheist, and who afterwards became a Capuchin. On that very day our honoured Sister and Mother Jeanne Charlotte de Bréchard, cousin to our Blessed Mother, and godmother to her youngest daughter, consulted our Blessed Father on her great desire to become a religious, and yet not to join the Carmelites, telling him of two very mysterious dreams, whereby the holy pastor knew that God had given her an idea of the congregation which he wished to erect ; and therefore he said to her after her confession ; " Would you, my child, like to throw in your lot with Madame de Chantal ?" She replied with great delight, that that would indeed be her greatest pleasure ; the Blessed Father ac-

cordingly took her as his daughter, and our dear Foundress regarded her as the companion of her happiness. Our Blessed Father, on leaving Monthélon for Savoy, bade our Blessed Mother practise a perfect humility; telling her that, as the first foundation-stone of this new edifice, he wished her to be so truly humble, that the spiritual edifice might be built in holy grandeur, and in a firmness more durable than time; telling her several times that he wished she should offer herself to God for the humblest condition, so as to glorify God by humility.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HOW GOD CALLED OUR FIRST SISTERS AND MOTHERS TO COMMENCE THE INSTITUTE, AND SOME REMARKABLE CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED THEREWITH.

It seemed that our Lord wished to interfere in the commencement of our Institute, as He had done in that of the very holy and illustrious Company of Jesus, selecting subjects in different countries, to unite them in the same manner of living, so as to have only one soul and one heart in God. The first daughter whom God destined for our congregation, after our Blessed Mother and Foundress, was our very honoured Sister and Mother, Marie Jacqueline Faber, on whom God looked so graciously while dancing at a large ball at Chambéry, that she was convinced of the vanity of her state, and of confusion at the hour of death, if

she continued therein; she had such trouble in keeping her countenance, that her heart turned this ball-room into a place of prayer; and after a little reflection she was filled with hatred of the world, and vowed to God that she would quit it. On her return to Annecy she placed herself under the guidance of our Blessed Father, allowing him to choose the life wherein she ought to serve our Lord.

While God was preparing her soul in Savoy, He had called another in France to be her companion; this was our very honoured Sister and Mother, Jeanne Charlotte de Bréchard, a young lady of good family, to whom God imparted, as we have already said, a sketch of our Institute: among other things, she saw in her vision, at the corner of the altar, our blessed Foundress singing the praises of God with an extraordinary air and ceremony; for it seemed to her that she was blowing a trumpet or hunting-horn to assemble maidens from all parts of the world, and that, turning towards her, she said to her: "Do you desire to be one of us?" and Jeanne having replied in the affirmative, our Mother placed in her hand a bunch of blue flowers, which was the pledge that she had acquiesced in becoming a member of the congregation. Our dear Mother Jeanne Charlotte de Bréchard was at that time in Burgundy.

Our dear and very honoured Mother Perronne-Marie de Châtel, a young lady from Savoy, was in Germany when she received her special vocation from Heaven, as is related in her life, and when she gave the Blessed Virgin, in the celebrated

chapel of Notre Dame des Hermites, a ring which she prized highly, in order that she might take her Divine Son as her Spouse in some congregation that was dedicated to this Holy Mother of God. After her, our very dear Sister Marie Adrienne Fichet, a young lady from Geneva, was called by God in an especial manner to our way of living; God showed her three stars, of which the one that formed the point of the triangle was larger and brighter than the others, and all three were standing over Annecy, whence she perceived a road covered with stars, which reached to the place where she was, as it were to convey her to join those that were above Annecy. As soon as she heard of the commencement of our congregation, she knew that it was the vision that God had showed her, and where He wished her to serve Him.

Our very honoured Mother Marie Aimée de Blonay was in Chablais, where, two years before the commencement of our congregation, she informed our Blessed Father that it was God's will she should be a religious, and that, as she knew no other reformed religious order than that of S. Clare, she aspired thereto; but our Blessed Father prohibited her speaking of her design, to which she was obedient; and our Blessed Father some short time after wrote to our Blessed Mother, informing her that Mademoiselle Faber was quite ready to co-operate with her, and that Mademoiselle de Blonay, who was in Chablais, had told him that she had aspired to become a religious in the order of S. Clare, but

that God had selected her for her congregation. "I told her to allow me to keep her secret, and I desire to be faithful in serving this soul as regards her desire; God has especially inspired me respecting her; I look on this young lady as our child." He thus wrote in another note: "It is very true that God has given us Mademoiselle de Blonay; you will love her much when you make her acquaintance. I shall, indeed, be deceived if God has not disposed her to something very good and very great, according to our design."

At the commencement of the year 1610, our Blessed Father, knowing that the Congregation was about to begin, informed our very honoured Mother de Blonay thereof, promising her her place, but she was delayed by the death of her brother. Divine Providence had already provided a lay-sister (*touriére*) for us; this was our good Sister Anne Jacqueline Coste, a holy peasent, who was in service in the town. As our Blessed Father was at the disposal of all his flock, she chose him for her director, and discovered to him that she had desired for several years to enter into religion. Our Blessed Father was extremely delighted at this, and wrote in much joy to our Blessed Mother, informing her that God had sent her a lay-sister, who was a true saint, and the kind bishop took great care in instructing this holy maiden.

It pleased Divine Providence to delay the time appointed for the commencement of our Congregation; for it was to have been begun at Christmas, 1609, and M. Frémiot had ti

delayed till the spring of the following year, 1610. Through this delay the plan of the Congregation became better known in France and Savoy. It was spoken of according to the idea of the speaker; the good praised and approved of it, and God vouchsafed supernatural lights about it to certain of His servants, as among others to the Rev. Father Jacques de Bonivar, a Jesuit. This holy man had the grace vouchsafed him to see his guardian-angel, and that of our Blessed Mother, united in a holy friendship with our Blessed Father, who, telling him one day that he had some saintly souls under his direction, whom he intended to employ in the service of God, this father replied as if he had been already made acquainted with his plan. The Rev. Fathers de Villars and Sonnier, both of the holy Company of Jesus, had also some knowledge of this work revealed to them. M. Anne of S. Bartholomew, Carmelitess, who is now held to be a saint, had an especial vision vouchsafed to her respecting the commencement of our Congregation, more than four years before its establishment. Our Blessed Mother having one day told her that she often desired to become a Carmelitess, she replied, "Madame, when you will have done that which God requires of you through the instrumentality of the bishop of Geneva, we shall think of our reply to you." Another day, speaking to her on the same subject, she said to her, "No, no, Madame, S. Teresa will not have you as her daughter; God desires you to be the mother of so many daughters, that you will be her companion."

A reverend Jesuit father told us that the saintly Abbot Joachim, who had prophesied of all the orders that are in the church of God, had thus spoken of our little Congregation: "There will rise a man who will be a great and faithful servant of God; he will gather together a body of the weak and infirm sex, whom he will render strong in God; this company will be full of light, and will have a great devotion to the very adorable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; to the Father, from a filial and reverential confidence; to the Son, by a holy desire of imitating His sacred virtues, such as humility, mildness, gentleness, charity, and love; to the Holy Ghost, by a full possession of His gifts. This Congregation will turn their hearts entirely towards the Blessed Virgin Mother of God, under whose protection it will advance, live, and obtain the kingdom of heaven. They will serve God with a loyal and faithful heart; they will practise perfect obedience, a mystical but perfect poverty, an angelic purity, a dove-like simplicity, cordial mildness, a very profound humility, founded on the knowledge of their weakness, an admirable strength of mind, and an exalted charity towards God as well as their neighbour. This Congregation will walk as in the presence of God, and their desire and aim will be to crucify themselves, and to ascend Mount Calvary, where they will reach a very high degree of perfection and union with God and their neighbour. They will be guided by love and mutual support, reason and discretion. They will reject from among their number the weak

and the infirm ; but all will be received by them. Such will be their commencement and their end, notwithstanding the opposition of human prudence, and the great man will do more than he imagined he would."

Such was the prophecy which the Rev. Father Petit published in a sermon which I have gone out of the way to quote in full, because it is a short sketch of what we should be, and of what she was whom God had selected as the first mother and guide of this new people. A few years before the commencement of our institute, there was a holy abbot at Grenoble called de S. Antoine ; he was blind ; and nevertheless it is said of him, that he perceived the levity and particular vanity of all whom he knew, and told them of it. In preaching one day against novelty in dress, he thus spoke to the younger part of the fair sex who were present : "I do not urge you to quit the world, for you will have sufficient reasons to adduce not to do so ; but the time is drawing nigh when God will give His church a manner of life at once ordinary and perfect." He made all his spiritual children pray that God might raise up a religion where young ladies of delicate constitutions might be received.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HOW THE YOUNGEST OF OUR BLESSED MOTHER'S DAUGHTERS DIED, AND HOW SHE LEFT HER FATHER-IN-LAW.

In the commencement of 1610, our Blessed Mother was more eager than ever to quit the world. Now there was living in Savoy a very pious gentleman, who had heard of the plan of our Congregation; he desired to become a Capuchin monk, and his wife a religious, and therefore desired her to establish some house of piety at Annecy; he therefore begged our Blessed Father to unite the plan of our holy Mother with that of his wife. Our Blessed Father conceded to his request with some reluctance; nevertheless, seeing that it was practicable, and a temporal assistance of which he never had had the slightest idea, he permitted him to purchase a house and commence his preparations. But God showed him that these plans, as we have already said in the foundation of this convent, were not from Him, so that they fell to the ground. In the meanwhile our Blessed Father prepared the spiritual portion of his plan, which, as he said, had no other object in view than to form a small congregation of women and maidens, living together under certain pious regulations, in order that this institute might be a refuge to the infirm, and that without much

corporal austerity they might practise the essential virtues of devotion.

We can see this in a beautiful letter which the holy prelate wrote to a Rev. Father of the Company of Jesus, and at the end of which he said, "As the Rev. Father Rector has told you, the foundation-stone which God has given us for this edifice, is a soul of excellent virtue and piety, which induces me to believe more than ever that the thing will succeed."

At the end of January, our Lord took to Himself our Blessed Mother's youngest daughter, Charlotte. She wept for her as a mother, being much attached to her, for she was a child endowed with rare qualities, and a good disposition for piety, so that our Blessed Mother had hoped that she would be her Eustochium. Scarcely had she dried her maternal tears, before Madame de Boissy, the mother of our Blessed Father, died. This blow affected her deeply, as her young Baroness de Thorens was deprived of the guidance of so virtuous a mother-in-law; but, on the other hand, it was, in the designs of Divine Providence, a means of silencing the children of the world, who spoke against the retirement of our Blessed Mother; for then they saw that as this young bride was deprived of her mother-in-law, it was but right that her mother should be near her.

She determined to leave Monthélon on the Festival of the Firebrands (the first Sunday in Lent.) Her son-in-law, the Baron de Thorens, came to escort her; the whole neighbourhood came to bid her good-bye, and the poor began

crying in so affecting a manner, as to bring tears from the most hard-hearted, and exclaiming, as was indeed most true, that they had lost their good and charitable mother. Those who lived near the house made such lamentations, that the Capuchins who were present could scarcely make themselves heard. At this juncture, a little child said, weeping all the while, of its own accord, and addressing itself to those who had been the bitterest in persecuting our Blessed Mother, "The light is taken away from you, because you desired to extinguish it; you must therefore do penance." This thought made all present cry yet more bitterly; but the most affecting sight was her father in-law, who bade her good-bye with so many tears, that he nearly swooned; his virtuous daughter-in-law threw herself at his feet, and asked pardon for the many causes of disedification that she had given him; and yet with an eye sparkling with joy, she recommended to his care her son. The good old man, more than eighty years of age, only replied by his tears. This generous woman caressed them all, one after another, recommending to them the fear of God; she embraced the poor, beseeching them to pray to our Lord for her; then getting into a carriage, she went to dine at Autun, where she was followed by a number of people, and among others a religious of the third order of S. Francis, whom she sent to her father-in-law, supplicating this good religious not to abandon him till his death, and to aid him in the salvation of his soul, which he did with great diligence. Before leaving Autun, she visited all the

places of devotion, which are there in great numbers,—this city having had the grace of being watered with the blood of many martyrs. After this she took leave of the Capuchins, gave some alms to the hospital, and then in two days after went to Dijon.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WITH WHAT GREAT GENEROSITY OUR BLESSED MOTHER LEFT HER COUNTRY AND HER PARENTS TO GO WHERE GOD CALLED HER.

This blessed woman had so generously put her hand to the plough, that she did not look back. Having arrived at her native town, her first action was to eat of the Bread of Life, in order that she might have strength vouchsafed her to arrive in Savoy; for truly she had many and great difficulties to get over on account of her love for her relatives. She remained with them several days, consoling them with her presence. She visited every place of sanctity in the environs of Dijon; offered her vows at S. Bernard's and Notre Dame de l'Etang, the two churches where she was accustomed to make her devotions.

On the 29th of March, the day appointed for her leaving Dijon, all her relations assembled at her father's residence; they were all deeply affected, and especially M. Frémiot, who, fearful that his tears might sanction their immoderate grief, retired to his own room; for all wept biterly save this

true Paula of our days, who embraced them all one after another with a constancy worthy of her generous virtue, without evincing the slightest weakness, though her eyes were swimming in tears, so fully did she sympathize with her relatives. After the rest, her son, the young Baron de Chantal, whom she loved as a mother has ever loved her only son, threw himself at her feet, and was pitied by all present. He spoke so feelingly, and yet in such studied language, that it was imagined that he had prepared his speech ; and his saintly mother replied to him with admirable courage, while all present were crying bitterly. His mother desired to go and bid adieu to her Father, whereon the young Baron, with great grace and many tears, threw himself on the threshold of the door. "Well then, mother, since I am unable to retain you, it shall at least be said that you have trodden on the body of your son." This act on the part of her beloved child affected her yet more deeply, but calling to mind the counsel of S. Jerome, she stepped over him, and then stopping, shed a few tears. M. Robert, a very virtuous and learned ecclesiastic, tutor to her nephews, the d'Effrans, and afterwards grand vicar to the bishop of Châlons, having admired her great firmness, was touched with a holy jealousy at perceiving such magnanimity, and approaching her, said, "What! Madame! can the tears of a young man weaken your constancy?" "No, no," replied she, smiling, "but remember I am a mother." She was exceedingly grateful to him for speaking thus, and hastened with great fervour to

beg the aid of Heaven on seeing her dear father approach her, whose venerable locks and great grief affected her deeply. They spoke for a length of time together, and then kneeling down to receive the blessing of so beloved a parent, he raised his hand, and said aloud, as follows: "It is not my province, O God, to dispute the eternal decree of Thy Divine Providence; I acquiesce therein with all my heart, and consecrate, with my own hands, on the altar of Thy will, this only daughter, who is as dear to me as Isaac was to Thy servant Abraham;" saying this he raised her up, and kissed her for the last time; "Go," said he, "my dear child, where God calls you, and let us both dry up our tears to do more homage to the Divine Will, and in order that the world may not imagine that our firmness is shaken."

With this advice and the paternal benediction, she commenced her journey in such spirits, that she began singing with our beloved Mother and Sister de Bréchard, the Psalms, "*Lætatus sum in his,*" and "*Quam dilecta tabernacula.*" They repeated several times those verses where the Royal Psalmist compares his liberty to that of a bird escaped from the fowler's snare. "*Anima nostra sicut passer.*" When they arrived at any hamlet, our Blessed Mother inquired if there were any sick, and went and served, consoled, and cleaned them; and in the morning before leaving, she made their beds, and recommended herself to their prayers. She was obliged to pass through Geneva; and, as a near relative of the late M. de Chantal had conferred some signal favours on that city, our Blessed

Mother feared that if she went by her name they would pay her some honour, and, therefore, she called herself by some other name. Our Blessed Father with about five-and-twenty persons, noblemen as well as ladies, went out to meet her, as she entered Annecy, in the name of our Lord, on Palm Sunday. She had with her her two daughters, Madame de Thorens and Mademoiselle de Chantal. Holy Week was spent in much devotion; our very honoured Sister and Mother Marie Jacqueline Faber, who had been previously acquainted with our Blessed Mother, gave herself up to her entirely on her arrival, and never left her. She and our dear Mother de Bréchard were always together, and encouraged one another in their holy undertaking. Our Blessed Mother conducted Madame de Thorens to her house, and remained with her for a little while, and as she was so very young, she provided her with persons capable of guiding her discreetly.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE LAST PREPARATION PREVIOUS TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF OUR INSTITUTE OF ST. MARY; AND A NEW TEMPTATION SUFFERED BY OUR BLESSED MOTHER.

Our Blessed Father, as the festival of Pentecost drew nigh, desired to commence our congregation on that day, in order that our daughters collected in a small upper room might receive the Holy Spirit, and be inebriated with the Divine gifts,

which would not only enable them to speak a new language, but live a new life. However, God, who had decreed that this sacrifice should be made on another day, permitted a delay to occur. The lady of whom we have above spoken as having purchased a house, either alarmed at the nobleness of the undertaking, or, as is more probably the case, our Lord not having vouchsafed to her a vocation, drew back from her word, which caused much talk throughout the country. Our Blessed Founder and Foundress were not in the slightest degree astonished at this; they, on the contrary, blessed God for having given them greater liberty in commencing the congregation in perfect poverty and simplicity. Our holy Founder entered into a treaty for the house which this gentleman had purchased, outside the town in the Faubourg de la Perriere. The holy prelate consented to all that was required of him; and returning from signing the contract, he said in a tone of great glee; "I was never happier than I am now; I have found a hive for my poor bees, or rather a cage for my little doves."

They began to prepare the house, and to erect a small oratory, and our Blessed Father drew up a few rules for the commencement of our spiritual life; this was his principal aim, and the only thing of which our Blessed Mother thought; so that our Blessed Father was accustomed to say, speaking of our commencement, that the Divine Providence had made the Visitation, as He did the world, out of nothing. Our Mothers Faber and de Bréchard looked forward with much pleasure for

the happy day of their retreat, and never thought of having other companions, when the Divine Goodness led to this town our very good M. Marie de Châtel, and Madame la Baronne de Villette, who came to see, like all the other ladies in the vicinity, our Blessed Mother before she entered the cloister. Our very honoured Mother de Châtel, had prayed to the Blessed Virgin, to show her the place where she wished her to serve her Divine Son. As soon as she saw our saint, she felt that she was the person whom the Blessed Virgin had given her as her mother. Confessing on the morrow to our Blessed Father, and discovering to him all her heart, he gave her a place in his new congregation, and thus destined her as a daughter to our Blessed Mother, who accepted her very cordially.

The enemy of our happiness, seeing that all his efforts were vain, that his infernal power was defeated by the Divine grace, and the obstacles for the commencement of the congregation fell to the ground, determined to make one more attack upon our Blessed Mother. On the vigil of the very Adorable Trinity he besieged her with a very severe temptation, which she thus related: "My soul was as in the pangs of death; I felt myself surrounded on all sides, and knew not how to escape; I was deprived in a moment of the cordial joy of my retreat, which had ever been a source of support to me in my other temptations; this column of constancy, which had ever been my support, crumbled into pieces; it seemed as if I saw my father and father-in-law loaded with grief and years, who cried for ven-

geance before God against me, and my children also were doing the same thing. It seemed as if I heard many voices remonstrating with me for having committed a great fault, and that which was yet more painful was, that I was censured with the words of Holy Writ, that I should be regarded as an infidel in the Church of God, for having deserted my children, and that without doubt I had deceived the spirit of the holy bishop, and that consequently the counsel he had given me to leave my relatives was contrary to the will of God. Could I have believed this, willingly would I have borne the ridicule of the world, in returning to my father and father-in-law; and the tempter presented to my mind several expedients whereby I could do so honourably."

She suffered this martyrdom for above three hours, and the hour of it will be understood by those who know what internal trials are, for they cannot be expressed in words. She was so pressed by this temptation, that she several times arose to consult our Blessed Father, but the silence of the night retained her; and placing her hand, as a sign of her fidelity, on the holy name of *Jesus*, which she had engraven on her heart, as we have said above, light returned to her mind, and throwing herself on her knees, she said to her enemy, "I cannot defeat thee by reason, for thou knowest not what it is;" then saying three times the *Deus in adjutorium*, she made an act of perfect resignation of herself and everything in the hand of God. "I remember very well," said she once, while speaking of this temptation, "that I was completely cured by

uttering the following words, 'My God, look down with the eyes of Thy mercy on this nothing; I abandon myself for ever to Thy Providence; let my relations, my children, and myself perish if such be Thy will; what matters it to me? my whole interest in time and in eternity is to obey Thee, and to serve Thy Majesty.'" These words being uttered from a sincere and loving heart, our Blessed Mother not only returned to her former tranquillity, but felt a joy altogether new; being like another Joshua, strong and robust, to guide her little flock into the Promised Land, which the true Moses of our day had shown her. And here I conclude all that we have been able to collect of our Blessed Mother, until her entry into religion, which I regard as the Promised Land.

PART II.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE VISITATION.

The foundation being dug, the chief corner-stone hewn by the hand of the Heavenly Workman, and the materials prepared, it now only remained to commence the edifice of our congregation in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. On the 6th of June, on which day the festival of the glorious S. Claude and Trinity Sunday fell, our Blessed Foundress and her first two beloved daughters having communicated, our Blessed Foundress commanded them to return thanks to our Lord, as it was the day of their deliverance from the world. This they all three did with great fervour, and the whole of that day was spent in visiting the churches, and in the company of the spiritual daughters of our Blessed Father. Between seven and eight in the evening our Blessed Mother and her two dear companions went one after another to receive the benediction of our Blessed Father, who seeing these three blessed souls in their nuptial robes, and with their lamps burning in their hands, going forth to meet the Bridegroom, and to His chaste wedding-feast, he said to them all three: "You whom the Lord

has saved must indeed be happy ; be, then, courageous, for God will be your God, and in His divine strength you will walk victoriously over the neck of your enemies." After this he placed in the hands of our Blessed Mother an abridgment of our Constitutions, written by himself. "Walk in this path, my very dear daughter," said he, "and make all those whom Heaven has given you to follow in your footsteps ;" then, lifting up his eyes to heaven, he blessed them all three, in the name of the Almighty Father, who had drawn them, in the name of the Son, the Eternal Wisdom, who had directed them, and in the name of the Holy Spirit, who had animated them with His loving flames.

Although they did all in their power to keep the day and the hour of their retreat secret, the people were waiting outside their houses, when these three victims, crowned with joy and happiness for the sacrifice, left the residence of our Blessed Father to enter their little house in the *faubourg*. The Baron de Thorens conducted his holy mother-in-law ; M. de Boissy, who succeeded his brother in the see of Geneva, took charge of our Mother Faber ; and our Mother de Bréchard was led by Monsieur de Thuille, now Comte de Sales, all three brothers of our holy Father. The rest of the nobility and people followed in such great crowds, that from the residence of our Blessed Father to the little house of these new brides of our Lord, the press was so great, as to be almost overwhelming. The air re-echoed with the praises of our Lord and His faithful

servants, who had considerable trouble in making their way into their little chapel, where several ladies were assembled to have the consolation of again embracing them.

Our beloved Mother much desired to be left alone, as the night was far advanced; and thus they entered their poor but lovely and desirable retreat. "This," said our Blessed Mother, "is the place of our delights, and our resting-place." Their first action was to kneel and return thanks to God, by saying the "*Gloria Patri*" thrice, and begging of God to give them sufficient grace to fulfil their vocation. After this they embraced one another. Our two dear mothers, Faber and de Bréchard, promised their filial obedience to our Blessed Mother, and there was among them an eternal and holy love. They also embraced the good sister Anne Jacqueline Coste, the *tourière*. Thus they lived together; for it seemed that our Lord did not wish to augment their number, having permitted our very honoured Mothers de Châtel and de Blonay to be delayed by their parents. Our Blessed Mother's first act after prayer was to read the rules which our Blessed Father had placed in her hands, telling her daughters, that as far as she was concerned, she promised God to be very faithful in their observance; and from that moment the little volume of this great law was ever in her pocket; she made her meditations thereon in order to keep it carefully and lovingly.

It was very late, and they made their examination of conscience, and recited the Litany of the

Blessed Virgin, beseeching this divine Queen to take them under her maternal care. We cannot express the joy with which they took off their worldly dress, although very modest, to put on one yet more simple. Our dear sister and Mother de Bréchard, taking off her *maule* and hoop, certain articles worn by young ladies at that time, she crushed them beneath her foot with great fervour. They began to observe great silence, and were wont to say, that they never spent so calm and peaceable a night as the first night of their retreat. As to our Blessed Mother, her heart was so occupied the whole of that night with a sentiment of the Divine Presence, and a loving gratitude towards His goodness, for the grace which had been granted her, that she slept but little. The enemy, who had pursued her continually, wished to show her that he was more vigorous than ever, and that he was licensed to enter the most retired solitude to persecute the friends of God. About two o'clock, A. M., just as she had fallen into her first sleep, he awoke her up suddenly, and surrounded her soul with darkness, bringing forward innumerable difficulties and impossibilities which would militate against her succeeding in her enterprise; advising her to do penance for her rashness, and speaking to her as if she had tempted God in taking on herself the management of a religious house, without funds, as how could she keep it up? and a thousand other vain objections. This attack lasted about two hours; and our Blessed Mother took not the slightest notice of the various movements which the enemy excited

in her, except by resolutely placing herself in the hands of God.

Her persecutor fled on finding himself despised; and the heart of this faithful spouse remained in her holy, joyous, and loving peace; and our Lord assured her that He would take care of our congregation, provided they reposed entirely and confidently on His paternal bosom. Whereupon that morning she dedicated herself and her congregation to honour God for ever by a perfect and filial abandonment of everything to this Divine Providence. It having struck five, our Blessed Mother was the first to rise, and aroused her two daughters, who had slept soundly all night. They dressed themselves in their novice habit, our Blessed Father wishing it to be done without any special ceremony, it not being a new dress in religion, but a common dress, conformable to the utmost degree of Christian modesty and humility, such as we have described it in the history of our foundation. Delighted at their habit, they gave one another the holy kiss of peace, and went to their little choir, to make mental prayer, presenting themselves as brides dressed according to the wish of their bridegroom. The Divine Goodness showed them that they had grace in His presence, and all three were inspired to pursue the happy life they had thus commenced. About eight o'clock our Blessed Father came to say mass, and to administer the holy communion to this little community. After mass he established the cloister for this first year of their novitiate. They no longer called them-

selves ladies. Our two first gave the name of Mother to our Blessed Foundress, and took upon themselves that of sister. From that day they commenced to study the little office of the Blessed Virgin, which a few days after they said in public; and we cannot express the trouble which our Blessed Mother took in habituating herself to a correct pronunciation of the Latin, which she found extremely difficult. Monsieur de Boissy, brother to our Blessed Father, at that time chanter in the Cathedral of Geneva, and afterwards bishop, came every day to teach the ceremonies at office, which we keep up to this day, according to the wish of our Blessed Foundress, who, we know, did everything in her power to avoid the slightest fault in the divine office.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE FERVOUR AND INCREASE OF THE LITTLE CONGREGATION.

Our Lord, who desired to be Himself the heritage, the possession, and the possessor of His chaste spouses, desired that they should enter His service perfectly divested of all worldly property, our Blessed Father not having allowed our Blessed Mother to bring anything, either out of her own property or that of her children, commanding her to be satisfied with an allowance guaranteed her by her brother, Monsignor de Bourges, as an alms. Their wealth consisted in

their cordial love of voluntary poverty; and their hearts were so detached from the things of this world, that they entered the cloister without bread, wine, or any other commodity: so that had anything occurred at night, they would have been unable to light a candle. A small barrel of wine was given them in alms on the 16th of June, 1610, which lasted them until the vintage of the following year, 1611, when they thought of taking in a provision of wine. As soon as they had done this, there was no longer any wine in their barrel, which was a subject of great astonishment to them; and our Blessed Mother said, that had she not thought of taking in a provision of wine, this little barrel would have lasted them, and that she always had the consolation that the poverty of our commencement was remarkable and visible everywhere, in the refectory, the wardrobe, and even in the church.

We have mentioned this so particularly in the history of our foundation,* that I shall make no reference to it here; I shall only say that this holy widow, putting her confidence in God, notwithstanding all her poverty, never felt the want of oil and flour for her family, inasmuch as she was perfectly obedient to the man of God, our Blessed Father, who was wont to say, that if he desired to describe true evangelical poverty and a total forgetfulness of everything on earth, together with a visible protection of Divine Providence, he had only to think of the commencement of the house of the Visitation of S. Mary.

* A work not published.

The hour having arrived when God had determined to increase the number of His lovers, He inspired virgins, attracted by the odour of the virtues of these three newly cloistered religious, to join them, and to attain together to the enjoyment of the perfumes of the Divine Spouse. Our dear Sister Claudine Françoise Roget was received six weeks after our establishment; she was exceedingly pious, and of one of the first families in the town; a thoroughly innocent soul, whom God had taken from the world before it had in any way corrupted her very pure and virginal heart. Three days after (on the festival of the glorious S. Anne) our very honoured Mother Peronne Marie de Châtel came to us. She was followed by our dear Sister Marie Marguerite Milletot, daughter of a counsellor at Dijon, and our very dear Sister Marie Adrienne Fichet, a young lady of Savoy, called to the congregation, as we have said before, by an extraordinary vocation, and shortly afterwards our dear Sister Claude Marie Thiollier, of Chambèry, entered into the congregation. She had scarcely been received, before our dear Sister Claude Agnes de la Roche applied, and was immediately followed by our very honoured Mother, Marie Anne de Blonay, both young ladies of Savoy, the one from Geneva, and the other from Chablais; the latter was the tenth member of the Institute, and is at present our superior. Now as among these ten persons there were scarcely two who were not of a delicate constitution, the world began to murmur at such receptions; whereon our holy Founder replied, with his ordi-

nary mildness, "What would you have me to do? I am the partisan of invalids."

The Revd. F. Ignatius Armand, S. J., writing once to our Blessed Father, thus referred to this subject; (his words being so much to the purpose, we quote them, not fearing to be blamed for our prolixity);—"Several, it is true, My Lord, speak of your plan; and as you humbly desire to be made acquainted with the idea of your very humble servant, I shall prove to your lordship that I am as obedient as I am affectionate. It is perfectly true that I have been told that you are founding a hospital rather than a devout assembly, but who will not laugh with you, my Lord, at the infantine follies of the children of the world? As for myself, I cannot refrain from exclaiming with our Lord: 'Perverse generation! whereunto shall I liken you? To those children who say in the streets, we have piped to you, and you have not danced, we have lamented, and you have not mourned; for John came neither eating nor drinking, and ye say, He is a Samaritan." There have come before us several religious, leading an austere life, which obliges them not to receive those who are delicate; the world complains of them, that they only wish for the healthy and the robust, and censures them for an indiscreet rigour. You have, my Lord, erected a seminary of those who specially imitate the benignity of the Incarnate Word, who rejected none; you have unravelled the secret in your Visitation, which is not too mild for the strong, nor too austere for the

weak. The children of the world censure this, and say you are erecting an hospital. Foolish people, unacquainted with the maxims of the Cross, do not know what that word costs. To die to ourselves is to live to God; to renounce oneself, to carry the Cross. Permit me, my Lord, to utter what I feel: it seemed to me, that in erecting this refuge for the weak, you said, like our Lord to the little children, let those who are sick, weak, and delicate, come to me, for to such belong the kingdom of heaven. Alas! who would not compassionate a virgin, who having the lamp burning in her hand, filled with good oil, could not enter a cloister to celebrate the nuptials of the Lamb, in consequence of her not being strong enough to wear a robe of camel's hair, as did John the Baptist, over her stomach, or sufficiently strong to fast one half the year, and to digest nothing but roots. As for myself, my Lord, I believe that your dear daughters will become the brides of Jesus; He was habited, not in a delicate robe, that being adapted for the court of the kings of the earth, but in a seamless robe, to show us that it did not hurt. This good Lord lived with S Martha, and did not refuse to go to the Festival; your company desire to imitate the concealed, contemplative, and benign life of Jesus; we meet in your Lordship's plan the poverty and mortifications of Bethlehem with the rational conveniences of Nazareth, the solitude of the wilderness, and the sweet conversation of Bethany. We see in the very face of your excellent daughter

Madame de Chantal, that she follows in truth the poor, mild, benign, cordial, and praying Saviour, loving solitude, serving His neighbour, glorified for a while on Thabor, and crucified on Calvary." Such was the testimony which the Rev. Father Ignatius Armand bore to our little congregation and our Blessed Foundress. This Rev. Father was a remarkable servant of God, who served his order as Provincial, and died in the odour of sanctity.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE LOVE OF OUR BLESSED FOUNDRESS AND HER COMPANIONS FOR THE RELIGIOUS LIFE.

The enemy perceiving the happy progress of our little Congregation, nothing abashed by the opposition with which he had been met for nine years by our Blessed Mother, obtained permission to attack her in her own person, thinking to interrupt or retard her progress in the service of God by corporal illness, as God showed to a holy soul. She was afflicted with a violent malady, in which, by the permission of God, such strong medicine was given, that she was supposed she would have died in consequence ; and she was for several years attacked with unknown complaints, commencing in the year of her novitiate, to which we shall presently refer.

The period appointed for the novitiate of our first mothers having come to a termination, our

Blessed Father warned his dear children that nothing ought to be offered without being first purified; for which they laboured with altogether a new fervour, especially our Blessed Mother, to whom our Lord gave a little health, to enable her to perform her spiritual exercises with more assiduity, and to prepare herself with greater ease. She longed so ardently for her profession, that she thus wrote to our Blessed Father: "When will that happy day arrive, when I shall make the irrevocable offering of myself to my God? His goodness has filled me with so extraordinary a wish to be altogether His, that if the feeling lasts, it will consume me. I never had so ardent a desire to attain to evangelical perfection; it is perfectly impossible for me to express what I feel, or the magnitude of the perfection to which God calls me. Alas! in proportion as I resolve to be faithful to the love of the Divine Saviour, it seems to me impossible to correspond to the greatness of His love. Oh! how painful is this barrier of our weakness in love! But what do I say? I lower, so it seems to me, the gift of God by my words, and I cannot adequately express this sentiment of love, which solicits me to live in perfect poverty, in humble obedience, and in very pure chastity."

Our Blessed Father came to examine his three novices, and found them not only prepared to make their oblation, but perceived that they were already advanced in perfection. After examination they conversed about the veil to be given to these candidates for profession. A crape veil was proposed to our Blessed Father

but he demurred, on the ground that it was too rich and delicate for the sisters of the Visitation, which was to profess great simplicity and poverty, and therefore serge was to be used; the veils were immediately made of the lining belonging to the dress which our Blessed Mother wore when she retired from the world, as there was not any money to purchase some new serge. Our Blessed Father and Mother tried this veil on the head of one of our sisters, to see how it should be arranged; and they found the way we now use the more simple, and less fashionable. After this was settled, our good sisters began to think of ornamenting the altar for the day of their profession. Monsieur Faber promised an altar to his daughter, but not having given it, our dear sisters Faber and de Bréchard, aware that there were five pieces of gold in the strong chest, which our Blessed Father had given them on the express understanding that it should be used only for the sick, urged our Blessed Mother to use this money, on the plea that she would not be acting contrary to the wishes of our Blessed Father, as the money would be replaced as soon as M. Faber should make his present. They were so urgent that our good Mother consented to their petition. After it had been spent, this little grain of sand troubled the clear conscience of our Blessed Mother, who that very evening informed our Blessed Father of what she had done in a note. Our Blessed Father, unacquainted with the importunities of the sisters, was so much concerned at this act of disobedience,

that on the morrow he went to the monastery, to correct her for it. As soon as he spoke, our innocent culprit threw herself at his feet, and with many tears acknowledged her fault. Our Blessed Father said to her in a grave and serious tone: "Daughter, this is your first act of disobedience; I have passed a restless night in consequence of it, so much was I affected by it." This acknowledgment affected our dear mother so deeply, that the holy prelate had much trouble in pacifying her, and she has often told us that the remembrance of this disobedience long after was wont to bring tears to her eyes.

On the eve of their oblation (5th of June, 1611) our Blessed Father received the annual confession of his three dear daughters. Our Blessed Mother, at the termination of her confession, thus renewed her vows: "O my God! I renew and re-confirm my vows of perpetual chastity and obedience to thy Divine Majesty, in the person of Messire François de Sales, thy well-beloved and very worthy bishop of Geneva, my only Lord, and very dear father in this world. I abandon myself, O my God and my Saviour, irrevocably and unreservedly to Thy Divine will and holy Providence; govern and use me as seems best to Thyself, by means of this great father of my soul, whom Thou hast given me, and vouchsafe to me the grace of perfect love for obedience." She afterwards invoked the assistance of Heaven by the intercession of several of the saints, and among others, the holy Father Abraham, whom she supplicated to offer her sacrifice to God.

On the morrow, the festival of S. Claude, our Blessed Father received the oblation of our first three mothers. They were only simple vows, as the holy prelate desired that the solid bond whereby the Sisters of the Visitation should be bound, should be love for their heavenly Bridegroom, and that they should observe obedience, poverty, and holy purity, as exactly as if they were obliged by solemn vows; and lastly, he desired that their profession should be like to that of S. Peter, on the day that our Lord made him make his three protestations of love. I have spoken in full in the history of our foundation of the whole ceremony of this profession, and the carpets used in the church were only pieces of cloth, scattered with small *bouquets* of wild flowers, fastened with pins. Our Blessed Mother, without premeditation, and accidentally, after her profession, entoned three times this versicle, *Hæc requies mea in sæculum sæculi,* which the choir took up; hence the custom of saying it in our professions, for we did not then perform all the ceremonies which we now observe. Our Blessed Mother's countenance was perfectly resplendent, as if God had anointed her with the oil of gladness above her companions; which being observed by our Blessed Father, he said to those present, "Let us retire, and leave them to taste of the gift of God in silence."

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE DEATH OF M. FREMIOT; OF THE JOURNEY OF OUR BLESSED MOTHER TO DIJON, AND THE GRACES WHICH SHE RECEIVED WHILE ON THE ROAD.

God, who wished to exercise our Blessed Mother in the practice of the holy resolutions which she had taken, called to Himself her father, M. Frémiot, at the advanced age of seventy-three. Our Blessed Father imparted this news to our Blessed Mother (whose resignation he was assured of) in the following words: "My child," said he on seeing her, "God wishes to be your only Father, for He has called to Himself the one that He had given you on earth; you have lost a good father, I a good friend; such is the will of God; that is all I have to say;" her only enquiry was as to the dispositions in which he had died, and was informed that his end had been altogether Christian, and that his spiritual father had been his own son, the Archbishop of Bourges, at which she was much pleased. But the enemy, who lost no opportunity of attacking this holy soul, suggested to her that her retreat from the world had hastened his death; that if she had only waited one year she would have been present at her father's death; and what would now become of her son, who had been her deceased father's ward? This death induced our Blessed Mother to go into Burgundy, according to the promise of our

holy father, to arrange the affairs of her children; which she did six weeks after her sacrifice. As our first mothers had not yet taken the vow of poverty, our Blessed Mother did so privately in the hands of our holy founder before leaving, for the purpose of negotiating the business of her children, and indited it in the following terms: "This 22nd of August, 1611, I, Jane Frances Frémiot, after having renewed my vows of obedience and chastity, urged by a desire of leading a more perfect life, do hereby make a vow of poverty, and submit to the dispositions and obedience of François de Sales, Lord Bishop of Geneva, my only father, all my present and future property, not only as to its use and usufruct, but also as to its disposition, to live in true evangelical poverty; so I protest and vow to the Eternal Father, in the name of Jesus Christ His Son, my Lord and very dear Saviour, by the grace of His Holy Spirit, in the presence of the ever Blessed Virgin Mother of my Lord Jesus Christ, of St. Joseph, my good angel, my holy Father Abraham, the blessed Apostles, my dear penitent St. Mary Magdalene, my well beloved St. Bernard, and all the heavenly court. Amen."

After these vows were made and renewed, and after having assisted at the oblation of our very honoured Sisters and Mothers Roget, de Châtel, and Milletot, she left for Dijon, accompanied by our dear Mother Marie Jacqueline Faber, and escorted by her son-in-law the Baron de Thorens. It would be superfluous to speak of the delight which her relatives felt at having her among

them once more. She was visited by nearly the whole of the town, for she only went out when obliged to go to church. She spent four months between Dijon, Monthélon, and Bourbilly, arranging all her affairs, consoling her father-in-law, and in a word, edifying all those whom she saw. The relatives of M. de Chantal influenced a number of religious to try to persuade her that it was her duty to remain in the country, to look after the property of her children, as she was not a cloistered religious; and that she should live among her relatives, as several of the Third Order of S. Francis were allowed to do. Our Blessed Mother was too well initiated in the holy folly of the cross to be in the slightest degree disturbed by the false wisdom of the world. One of her relatives, seeing that mild measures had no effect in her, wished to use violent measures, telling her, in an angry tone, that it was a disgrace to see her dressed in a serge habit, and that her veil ought to be torn into a thousand pieces. Our Blessed Mother replied with a smile: "He who loves his crown better than his head will not lose one without the other;" thus testifying that her veil was her crown, and that she preferred the religious state to her life. M. de Thorens was much delighted, as well with her wisdom as her eagerness in getting through her business, that she might return as quickly as possible to her beloved Savoy; she seemed to be a stranger in her native land, only regarding the permanent city of heaven as her country, and knowing no more agreeable resting-place than the Visitation.

Her relatives did all they could to persuade her to spend a year with them, but she would not hear of it, inasmuch as God showed her this was a stratagem of Satan to retard the advancement of the congregation, the commencement of which he could not prevent. Thus she was eager to return, losing no time after she had performed all that was really necessary for the good of her children.

This second separation was as affecting as the first, but nothing could move this generous woman from her undertaking. The Divine Spouse, who had led His Well-beloved into the country, gave her of His Breast, better than wine. During her stay in Burgundy she entered a small chapel to hear mass, and no sooner had she knelt down than she fell into an ecstasy; and so completely did she lose herself, that she neither perceived when the priest ascended the altar nor when he had finished mass. Soon after the termination of the mass, M. de Thorens, perceiving that our Blessed Mother was still in prayer, left the church to order dinner, and then returned for her, and inquired of our dear Sister Faber if she would be much longer at her prayers, whereon he was told that she had not moved, nor had she ventured to speak to her; he was more bold, and going to awake her, took her by surprise. No little time elapsed before she came to herself, and then her first act was to enquire if she might be permitted to hear mass; she was told it had been said; whereon she replied not, but went away. Our Blessed Mother was so absorbed that she did not know whither they were taking her, and she could not

dine, which induced M. de Thorens to say, when our Blessed Mother felt a little indisposed, that she ought not to complain, as our Blessed Lord had taken away her appetite. She mentioned the grace which she had received in the little church to the Rev. Father Granger, of the Society of Jesus, and we know that it was one of the greatest that she had hitherto received. While speaking of this voyage in 1635 to our very honoured Mothers Faber and de Châtel, she told them, in compliance with their earnest and repeated prayers, that the greatest light she then received, was a knowledge of the pleasure that God took in a pure and perfect soul, and at the same time she felt a desire to do that which would be the most perfect and agreeable in the sight of God, as soon as she knew and could discern it; and took a vow to this effect, after she had obtained the necessary permission from our Blessed Father.

CHAPTER V.

OF HER INCOMPARABLE CHARITY IN VISITING THE SICK.

She returned from this journey on the vigil of Christmas, and immediately had an interview with our Blessed Father, with whom she spent a portion of the day, speaking of the success of her undertaking; she then returned to her dear

daughters, whom God had visited in her absence with severe illness, but at the same time had overwhelmed them with many supernatural graces I know not if ever the Festival of Christmas was spent with a more holy and devout joy. Although our Blessed Mother had returned from a long journey performed on horseback, in severe weather, and was much fatigued, still her only refreshment was assisting in the office of Matins. She spoke a little with our Blessed Father on the Festival of the Nativity of our Lord and on S. Stephen's day, and informed him of the inspiration she had received of making a vow always to do that which she should know to be the most perfect and the most agreeable to God. He fully approved her idea, and on the morrow, the Festival of S. John the Evangelist, the holy prelate said the Mass of the Community, during which our Blessed Mother took this vow, the acme of all perfection.

On the last day of this year (1611) the first annual chapter was held, in which new officers were appointed, and assistants named, as is still done. After these changes were effected, our very honoured sister and Mother Faber, kneeling down, said, "Mother, we ask an obedience to visit the sick." Everything occurred as we have related in our history of the foundation.

"After the profession of our holy Mother, our blessed Father thought there was a good opportunity to begin the exercise of serving the poor. Our worthy mother speaks as follows of the order observed in this holy practice: At the chapter

of the last day of the year, after the officials had been appointed and the ordinary changes made, one of the senior sisters knelt down, and said in the name of all: 'We ask for a holy obedience to serve the poor of our Lord, in order that at the day of judgment He may say to us: I was sick, and you visited Me.' The superioress consulting with certain of the others, made choice of those whom she judged fit for this exercise, and named them on the following day after grace at dinner, saying, 'Such and such a one, and we also, on the part of this house, will visit the poor of our Lord, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Each month those who were to perform this office set out, and before doing so, came to receive the blessing on their knees; when the superioress went, she gave it to her companion, and received it herself from our Lord, before the Blessed Sacrament. One of them, according to the appointment made, acted as superior to the others who accompanied her, and her companion did nothing but what was enjoined her. They never called except at houses to which they were sent, and never spoke or stopped in the streets. They kept their veils down, and when they returned they came to receive the benediction; and she who had been in authority, gave an account of the state of the sick and of their necessities. In these visits, they assisted the sick, not only with consolations and services, but also with everything they had need of, as food, linen, clothes, pillows, and the like. Some of them they found in the most

extreme poverty, misery, and filth, and full of such stench and vermin, that it required a charity no less than that of these dear souls to serve them, which they did with incomparable courage, cleaning them, and making them comfortable; sometimes they found them in a state of misery which will not bear description, from having no strength to get up, nor any one to assist them; there were others all covered with ulcers, which they dressed; others filled with vermin, whom they trimmed and cleansed; in a word, they did everything which was required for their cleanliness and comfort. They had them visited by their own physician, and provided them with the remedies which he prescribed. When they were in danger of death, they sent notice of it to the parish-priest, that he might give them the Holy Sacraments, and took care to dispose the sick persons to receive them; and those who died they buried. These poor people were melted with love and gratitude; and in very truth, says our good Mother, they gave us great lessons, and we were all delighted at the great virtues which they practised in their miseries, and especially at their patience and resignation to the good pleasure of God, whether it were that they should remain in suffering or die."*

On the morrow (Jan. 1612) our Blessed Mother, accompanied by our very honoured sister and

* This paragraph, which we have inserted in the text of the narrative is from the MS. history of the Foundation of Annecy quoted by the Abbé Boulangé.—*Edit. Orat.*

mother Faber, went out for the first time to visit the poor, and console the sick. Our Blessed Mother was ever the foremost in these duties, and was exceedingly condescending to the poor; however great their distress, her love was yet greater. She always went through the town accompanied by another religious, as they never went out alone. Sometimes she met with some poor creatures sleeping in barns, and as it were, encrusted in dirt and poverty, owing to their having none whom they could apply to for help; she cleaned them, without, however, letting it be perceived that she was in the slightest degree inconvenienced thereby, serving them joyfully, and yet recollected in God. One of her religious, who often accompanied her in her works of charity, enquired how she could do so without exhibiting those signs of disgust which nature invariably feels in such works of mortification; whereon she replied, "My dear daughter, I have never yet thought that I was serving a fellow-creature; I have always believed that in the poor I was wiping the Wounds of Jesus Christ, when He was wounded for our sins, and covered with as many wounds as if He had been attacked with leprosy." It was indeed a sight to see this holy lady going through the town, attended by one or two of her religious, carrying soup and broth for those who were sick, and pillows and bed linen for the poor, which she first of all showed to the physician, and then followed his prescription.

We must not omit remarking here that during the several years which these works of charity

lasted, though our institute was exceedingly poor, yet we never experienced the want of anything that was necessary for the poor, no matter how large their number. When our Blessed Mother was unable to visit them, two of the eldest of her sisters, after having received her benediction, fulfilled this act of charity. I should indeed be diverging much from my history, were I to relate the many acts of mortification which our Blessed Mother performed in this exercise of charity, which was her daily occupation and delight. A holy love of Jesus urged her to serve these poor, and her devotion made her indefatigable. I shall only relate two instances which will enable the reader to judge of the others, perseverance being the virtue which carries off the most glorious prize.

There was a poor woman, perfectly helpless, residing in the faubourg of Annecy, who had a violent attack of dysentery; she could not move in her bed. Our Blessed Mother went punctually every morning to aid and serve her; her companion held this poor creature in her arms, while our worthy mother changed her linen, and rolled up the dirty linen, which she carried to the house to have washed. She persevered for more than four or five months in this act of charity, after which, this woman being cured of her first illness, was attacked with another malady; during which our Blessed Mother dried her linen at the fire, with her companion, whom she, however, commanded to turn away her face, lest she should be incommoded by the smell, while she herself did

not do so; and when this was remarked, her reply was, "This is the work I am made for."

It happened that a poor creature who had abandoned God, and was therefore deserted by all, fell ill, being eaten up with the itch and cancer. A few ladies in the town who had taken on themselves to inform our Blessed Mother when any one was ill, told her of this wretched being, adding, "But what use will there be in serving one who is so abandoned?" "On the contrary," said our saint, "as she has done such wickedness, we must assist her to return to the path of virtue." She accordingly went to see this poor creature, whom she found in such a state of misery, so eaten up with cancer and vermin, as to excite the compassion of the most hard-hearted; she had a high fever, and at the same time a severe cold; but she was so weak that she was unable to spit; whereon our charitable mother, with a white handkerchief, wiped the phlegm from off her mouth without giving a thought to the danger arising from inhaling the breath, and touching the saliva of one so infected; she cut her hair with her own hands, combing it daily, (which she often did for other poor) and served her in so charitable a manner, that she cured her both in body and soul, and all Annecy was filled with edification.

A poor woman, a stranger, having nowhere to go where she could be confined, was delivered in a stable, but God had pity on her, and induced our Blessed Mother to go to the stable, which was at some little distance from the convent. Here she found both mother and child on the point of

death; she immediately snatched up the child, and kneeling down, fearing that it might die, baptized it. She then waited on the poor woman, had a bed conveyed to the stable, and served her during her illness. In this work of charity our Lord imparted to His faithful servant a revelation respecting His holy birth in a stable; and she accordingly saw that she could not look on that stable without much devotion and gratitude for the good that she had received from God. She was extremely solicitous that the poor whom she served should be at peace with God, making them confess at the commencement of their illness, and she was no less anxious, when need was, to make them receive the last sacraments. She then put clean linen on their beds, even ornamented the mangers, when they were in farm-buildings, or stables, and thus adorned the place where the Blessed Sacrament was to be brought, and accompanied It, when she could, with the greatest devotion; and when the poor died, she washed and laid them out.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE POVERTY OF OUR FIRST MOTHERS.

Our little Visitation, like a young vine, daily increased, and gave great delight to our Blessed Father, who was the confessor of this dear community, of which our Blessed Mother was Superioress

and Mistress of the Novices, until the number of the novices was too large for her to accomplish both duties. She enjoyed great peace of mind while thus occupied; and while speaking of it was wont to say, "I did not merit such grace as to live among such pure and good souls, of whom I must say that there was no emulation among them, except the rivalry of each wishing to be the most active in performing offices most degrading in the sight of men, and a striving to excel each other in fervour; and I much doubt if a more perfect simplicity could be met with than that practised by these beloved souls, nor greater love for humiliation and mortification; their conversation was truly devout, without duplicity or distrust of each other, and they were so exact, that they made the slightest failure in their duty a point of self-accusation."

Our Blessed Father desired, in order to humble them yet more, that a sister should alternately take on herself the superintendence of the kitchen and domestic offices, in order that all might be equal; our Blessed Mother never exonerated herself from this office of being cook, unless it was through illness. The week of serving the sisters was her good week, and she anticipated what she would have to do; "in order," said she, "that I may not, if possible, be diverted from completing my good week properly."

In the proximity of the house where our institute was commenced, was a small meadow; and as we were often in want of milk for the children of the poor, our worthy Mother determined to keep

a cow, which the sisters guarded in their turns, lest she should spoil the young trees. Our Blessed Mother diligently fulfilled this office, and took great delight therein, when she could do so without encroaching on the time she had allotted for the spiritual service of her dear novices, or that set apart for aiding and consoling the poor. Her principal care was to indoctrinate her daughters with the true interior life and spirit; and all of them had an attraction to this life, so that they only sought for mortification, recollection, silence, and retreat in God, whose immense goodness gratified these dear souls with a fervour altogether supernatural; several among them in a very short time reached to a high degree of union; others had extraordinary lights about the Divine Mysteries communicated to them; they were also occasionally favoured with holy ecstasies, when they received great gifts and graces from God. So that our Blessed Father, in his preface to the "Treatise of the Love of God," says, that that holy book was a portion of the communications he had had with our first mothers and sisters, and that their purity and piety had compelled him to speak to them of the most delicate points of spirituality, far beyond all that he had said in his Introduction to a Devout Life.

Our Blessed Mother, speaking of these graces conferred on them at the commencement of the institute, said to us one day, "Seeing these dear souls so gifted by God, and that this caused much admiration, I was stirred up to pray to God that He would preserve us in our poverty,

having ever present before me those words of S. Paul, 'Your life is hid with Jesus Christ in God,' which our Blessed Father added to the ceremonial he was preparing for our profession. I meditated deeply on these words; and having communicated with our Blessed Father, and by his orders with our good Father Jacques de Bonival (S. J.) regarding the special impulse I had to beseech God the Father that it might please Him to hide our life in Him with Jesus Christ and Him crucified, they were of my opinion, and offered up the Holy Sacrifice for this intention. I communicated at that of our Blessed Father, and made my thanksgiving while the Rev. Father de Bonival was saying his Mass. At the time that this good servant of God communicated, there was imparted to me the interior certitude that the Divine Goodness had been pleased to vouchsafe to our institute the gift of the interior life, concealed and suffering lovingly with God; that His immense liberality would not deprive us of the graces prepared for those souls who should be faithful to Him in this little congregation; but that those graces would be, like the graces of the Son of God, in proportion to our nothingness, concealed in God, and their manifestation reserved for eternity; and that if made visible in a few souls, it would only be out of homage to the Transfiguration and miracles performed by Jesus Christ. What consoled me yet more, was, that our Blessed Father, and Rev. Father de Bonival, and myself, coincided in our ideas; whence we concluded that God desired that the daughters of this institute

should be the admirers and imitators of His Divine Son, and His perfect life, at once interiorly concealed in God, and yet at the same time an altogether common life in the eyes of men; wherefore we did our best to return thanks to God for His infinite goodness."

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE DIFFERENT ILLNESSES OF OUR BLESSED MOTHER, AND HER RESIGNATION.

It was the will of God that this institute should be specially used for the weak and infirm; and therefore He gave us a mother, who could, by her own experience, compassionate our infirmities, in order that, being experimentally acquainted with illness, she might give us consolation. The first years spent by our Blessed Mother in religion were passed in continued illness, and yet, unless this had been the case, she would have imagined that our Blessed Father had been too mild respecting penances and corporal macerations, to which she was much given. Her illness commenced, as we have said, in the year of her novitiate. She was well at intervals, and, generally speaking, notwithstanding the delicacy of her health, never omitted her religious exercises; she never seemed more strong than when ill, the grace of God working in her and by her. She was often taken so ill that it was imagined she was on the point of death; her countenance

was calm, tranquil, and serene, and her whole body deprived of strength; at other times she would lose the power of speech. Our Blessed Father used to be immediately sent for, and in proportion as he spoke to her of our Blessed Lord, she would return to herself, and the attack would pass away. There was no other way of remedying the disease of our Blessed Mother than by sending for our Blessed Father, who thus speaks of her complaints: "I recommend to your prayers the health of the mother-bee of our new hive; she is indeed very ill, and our good M. Grand, although one of the cleverest physicians I have ever met with, is at loss what to prescribe for her, saying that he is unacquainted with the cause of her complaints. I do not know if the devil wishes to frighten us thereby, or perhaps she is not ripe for the harvest; however, there is no better remedy, and none she likes better, than to expose herself to the Sun of Justice." Our holy Father, believing that she would have died in one of her attacks, as much from love as from the force of suffering, and as he was willing to sacrifice his own will on the altar of the Divine Will, said to her, "Perhaps God, my child, is contented with our essay and desire to erect this little company, in like manner as He was contented with Abraham's will to sacrifice his son; if such be the case, and it be His will that we should retrace our steps, let us do so;" "Yes," replied our saint, "His will be done in time and in eternity. If God does not will us to go further, He will at least have seen that we are willing to accomplish the work

with which He has inspired us." Thus these holy souls resigned themselves to the Divine Will. The complaints of our Blessed Mother, however, continued to increase, and the physicians in the town were of opinion that farther aid should be called in.

Among those thus consulted, was a physician from Geneva. Our Blessed Father, like a watchful shepherd, hoped by this means to win back this sheep from the claws of the wolf of heresy; and in order to speak with him yet more plainly, he took an opportunity when he was in our Mother's chamber; her delight at this was sufficient to send away her bad symptoms. The physicians were perfectly puzzled to discover the cause of our Blessed Mother's illness, which made one of them say that her illness was caused rather by love than any disease, so that they only gave some slight prescription regarding her diet; and never did this holy patient request that any remedy should be given her; she only exhorted her daughters to support her by their good actions in the perfect observance of the rule, and to recreate her by the flowers of their fervent affection in the service of God. She never referred to her disease, and having placed her health and life in the hands of God and obedience, she no longer thought of herself. She had an incessant fever, accompanied with convulsions, which left behind them a fever that hung about her for some time, and for which the physician ordered her to abstain from supper, which weakened her much.

"I knew well that I was much weaker, but I did not think of it; and until our Blessed Father commanded me to speak whenever anything was given me which I knew was not good for me, I should have had a scruple in saying a word, after having given myself up to God and obedience, and I would rather have died from submission and self-abandonment, than lived by being anxious about myself." Another time she remarked, that though her illness had commenced in the first years of her religious life, still it did not prevent her performing her spiritual duties, nor did it seem to hinder her promptitude therein. "I did not consider that I suffered much, except from my repugnance to be treated differently from the rest of the community, and from seeing my Blessed Father and all my good sisters so anxious, whom, however, thank God, my sickness did not hinder me from serving."

During one of her fits our Blessed Father sent for the physician from Geneva, who wished to cure her, without, however, thinking of his own soul. When she returned to herself, he said that he could neither discover the cause of her illness, nor what would cure her, and that being so pious, he doubted not but that she had some celestial consolation, which supported her during her sufferings. The infirmarians who were charged to wait on our Blessed Mother, often heard her say, when she believed herself to be quite alone, "Yes, my God, make this too eager nature suffer, in order that it may learn whether its attraction to external rigours be good for others or itself."

Worldlings, on hearing of the continual illness of our Blessed Mother, were delighted at the prospect of the designs of our Blessed Father being defeated; but he during all this was exceedingly patient, and used to say, that if God desired to take away the first foundation-stone, yet He would know what to do with the rest of the building, and that therefore he was perfectly calm as to the future. Nevertheless he was very attentive during her illness, visiting her like another S. Jerome his S. Paula, and writing to her occasionally little devout notes. We have one now before us written by him, wherein he beseeches her to be more moderate in following the exercises of the house, and to take care of her health for his beloved Congregation; "for," said he, "you know, my dear Mother, that you are in this enterprise the courage of my heart, and the heart of my courage."

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE DEATH OF OUR BLESSED MOTHER'S FATHER-IN-LAW, AND HER JOURNEY TO MONTHELON; HER GREAT PATIENCE AND GENTLENESS IN MATTERS OF BUSINESS.

As we have before said, the illness of our Blessed Mother was no hindrance to her in governing her house, God having given her a two-fold presence of mind, one to support her illness, and the other to superintend the exterior and interior business of her Community, which increased so rapidly, that

the little house in the faubourg was too small. They were compelled to build a convent, and to live in the town, which could not be done without much difficulty ; however, the obstacles which lay in their way having being surmounted, they changed houses on the vigil of All Saints, and on the morrow the Blessed Sacrament was there exposed. This occurred in the year 1612. After their removal, our dear Sister Claude Françoise Roget, the first received in the congregation after our first three mothers, was taken ill, but as great attention was paid her, her lungs, which had been attacked from her very infancy, did not show that they were diseased until the spring of the following year, and she died in the month of June, during the Octave of Corpus Christi ; our Blessed Mother never left her during her illness, assisted her carefully at the last moment, washed and laid her out herself, and lamented her decease like a mother. As they had no burial ground, the body of this beloved sister was carried to the church of the Rev. Father Jacobins, and as our Blessed Mother and our sisters were not yet cloistered, they assisted at her interment. This dear sister was only eighteen years of age ; she was a true dove, all pure, and fit to wing her flight into the Bosom of God, there to take up her eternal rest. This funeral was scarcely finished, before our Blessed Mother was informed of the death of her father-in-law, who died in his eighty-fourth year.

Our Blessed Father judged that it was absolutely necessary that our Blessed Mother should

go into Burgundy ; a journey which she undertook in the spirit of obedience, taking as her companion our very dear Mother Peronne-Marie de Châtel ; she was accompanied by the Barons Thorens and de Chantal. She arrived at Monthélon without any accident, where she appeared with a new heart, compassionate towards those who had persecuted her. She was exceedingly kind to the servant of the deceased old man and her children ; every one blessed God for it, and yet marvelled at her conduct. As the business of the deceased had been much neglected, the rents of several years not having been paid, and no receipts given, this gave no little trouble to our Blessed Mother to get the accounts neatly made out and equitably settled. She never stirred from her sitting-room during the whole day after her spiritual exercises had been completed ; surrounded with papers and peasants, she retained her usual devout gravity and gentle firmness, not even speaking louder than usual, as we have been informed by those who have been eye-witnesses and admirers of the great wisdom, justice, and moderation of this holy woman.

On one occasion one of the peasants was a great deal more clamorous than the rest, and used several indiscreet expressions ; for having been intimate with the servant, she had promised to let him off without paying. Finding that this was not the case, he was exceedingly angry with our holy mother, thinking and saying that she had torn out his receipt. Seeing him in such a passion, she prevented Baron de Thorens striking him, and ordered

our good Mother de Châtel to pray for the poor fellow; and going up to him, she took him by the hair, and made the sign of the cross on his fore head. The effect was instantaneous, he immediately became calm, threw himself at her feet acknowledging that he was wrong, and humbly begging her pardon, which she willingly granted. She also remitted the debts of many who would have been over-burdened had she compelled them to pay what they owed. She examined all the terriers and title-deeds, the agreements, leases, and, in a word, all that was requisite to establish order; she placed farmers in the farm-houses, and stewards in the châteaux.

She rode in one day from Monthélon to Bourbilly, distant about ten or twelve leagues. As her son, the Baron, was still very young, and employed in the court, she sold a portion of the furniture, leaving only a few rooms furnished. But before leaving, she took care to provide for the servant of the deceased old man and her children, rewarding them for the evil she had received from them, as if they had been her greatest benefactors, without referring to the past. She had this woman to eat at her table, and conversed with her of all that her father-in-law had said and done since her departure, and of his happy end. What gave great edification was, that when this holy woman spoke of business, she never mentioned herself, looking on herself as truly dead to the world, always saying, "You owe my children so much."

On her return home she passed through Di-

jon, edifying all whom she met, and only stopping where she was obliged. The Rev. Father Matthias, of Dole, a Capuchin of great piety, who had been very intimate with our Blessed Mother before her entry into religion, saw her while she was in Burgundy, where he was superior at Autun. He wrote as follows to our Blessed Father: "Our Madame de Chantal is no longer a Judith, for she is a S. Paula; all her actions show the operation of God in her soul, and traces of your spiritual direction; she is no longer a baroness, but a Shunamite; the whole of this country is filled with the sweet-smelling savour of her celestial virtues; our religious of Dijon, like the daughters of Sion, call her blessed, and all our ladies praise her exceedingly."

CHAPTER IX.

OUR DEVOUT MOTHER FOUNDS A HOUSE OF OUR INSTITUTE AT LYONS; THE MIRACULOUS GRACES THAT SHE RECEIVES.

She returned towards the close of the year 1613, and the whole of the following year (1614) was spent in building a new convent. Our blessed founder and foundress had several difficulties and many obstacles to overcome, in which they displayed much virtue; but God so blessed their designs, that in spite of every obstacle, their building was terminated happily, without either of them losing

their equable temper and interior peace. While the building of this first convent of our institute was advancing, our Lord prepared the way for the commencement of a second house of the congregation. This prudent prelate, who did not light his candle to place it under a bushel, no longer desired to conceal our holy mother, who was a burning lamp of every virtue. Madame d'Esgoufiers, religious of the Paraclete at Saintonge, having seen the "Introduction to a Devout Life," and having been informed that the author of that divine work had erected a congregation, where the laws he had drawn up were more perfect and spiritual than those she had admired in that her favourite book, made a vow to God that she would go to Savoy to see this holy prelate and his congregation. She met Madame d'Auxerre at Lyons, who was touched with the same wish. This was a lady of high rank, who, during the twenty years she had been a widow, had continually aspired to a perfect and retired life. She had tried several religious houses, but on acquaintance with their institute never could meet with what she desired. She accompanied Madame d'Esgoufiers after Easter, 1613. As soon as she saw our worthy mother with her little flock, she felt in her soul the repose which she had till then sought for in vain, and said, "This, indeed, is the kind of life which God has made me desire without knowing it." She returned to Lyons, resolved to procure a house of S. Mary in that city, like that which she had seen at Annecy, and accordingly obtained the requisite

permission from Mgr. Denis de Marquemont. But the enemy of all good works endeavoured to defeat her plan.

There was a great deal of jealousy excited against the congregation of the Visitation, and it was wished to introduce instead a congregation of the Presentation at Lyons. Madame d'Auxerre was asked to be the foundress and superior of this congregation at Lyons, as Madame de Chantal was at Annecy. Though this good soul was pleased with the humility of the Visitation, which she had seen, and feared nothing so much as being in authority, nevertheless she submitted to her superiors. Another order was commenced, and intelligence of this was announced at Annecy at the very time the sisters were expecting to be sent for to Lyons. Our Blessed Mother was in no way disappointed, but on the contrary, blessed God, telling our sisters that this would teach them to root themselves in humility, and that afterwards God would take care to transplant them here and there as He pleased, a maxim which she acted on throughout her life; being always more careful to establish her order in virtue than to increase the number of her houses. "Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it;" man had commenced this new congregation of the Presentation, and man would destroy it. Confusion of tongues sprung up among the new religious. I mean that such confusion arose among them, that they did not spend six weeks together, although very pious souls, and that they allowed no longer time to elapse before

they wrote to our Blessed Father and our worthy Mother, begging them to found a house of the Visitation of S. Mary at Lyons; and Mgr. de Marquemont sent M. Ménard, sacristan at S. Nisier, with a carriage for the sisters.

Our holy mother left Annecy on the festival of S. Paul, 1615, with our very honoured Mothers Marie Jacqueline Faber, Peronne-Marie de Châtel, Marie Aimée de Blonay, and also Madame d'Esgoufiers, who was as one of ours, acting exactly as if she had been a religious. Our holy Mother left in delicate health, but delighted to work for the glory of God. She felt, on drawing nigh to Lyons, that the guardian-angel of the kingdom of France welcomed her, and she knew interiorly that the institute would make great progress in France. They were obliged, before our Blessed Mother and her dear flock arrived at Lyons, to alter the royal letters obtained for the other establishment, and place the word Visitation in lieu of that of Presentation. Much delay was required for this, but our Lord arranged it all. On the opening of the letters the words were miraculously changed, and where men had written the words "*Congregation of the Presentation*," the words "*Congregation of the Visitation of St. Mary*," were written in large and well-formed characters. This miracle was much admired, and it thereby happened that our little Institute was more fancied than it had been. Those who were opposed to our establishment then said, "The hand of God works for these religious."

Our Blessed Mother and daughters arrived

there on the eve of the Purification ; they were received with open arms by the congregation, especially by Madame d'Auxerre, who having only aspired to the perfection of humility, immediately gave up the keys to our Blessed Mother, and prepared to obey her. The establishment of these nuns of the Visitation of S. Mary was opened with great solemnity on the festival of the Purification. Mgr. de Marquemont himself presided, and evinced great respect for the virtues of our Blessed Mother. On that same day the good Madame d'Auxerre changed her habit, as well as her two companions, and took that of our novices. She received the name of Marie Renée, and was the temporal foundress of this house, as is said in the history of the foundation, and in the Life of this very honoured sister, who was truly a sun of virtues, but especially in her humility. Our Blessed Mother told us that she never saw this good sister without feeling herself excited to humble herself before God, owing to the great humiliation evinced by the virtuous novice, who, on her side, imagined that she was not worthy enough to be the companion of our Blessed Mother, whom she did not even dare to approach.

This humble sister, related that when the Saint entered the house, she felt God say to her in her heart: "I give you as your superior one of the greatest servants that I have on earth, and in this, my daughter, I prove to you My love." These words were so deeply impressed on the heart of our dear sister d'Auxerre, that she scarcely dared to look our holy Mother in the face, and when-

ever she spoke to her two companions, or the other novices who were received after her, it was to urge them to profit by the guidance of this great soul. She was often heard saying to herself, when she imagined that she was alone, "Do you know, Marie Renée, what you are? you are only so much filth near this mountain of perfection;" then turning towards our Lord, she would say, "Oh, my God, if I might ask one favour of Thee, it would be to beg Thee to allow death to close my eyes. It is enough for me that I have seen one house of S. Mary established in France. Send me to purgatory to purify me of my sins, and do not allow me to enjoy so much happiness in living with your saint." Thus do the just recognize one another. The prayer of this good servant was heard, for she did not finish her novitiate, as she was deemed fit to make an eternal profession of love, and obtained that grace which her humility forbade her aspiring to. Our Blessed Mother closed her eyes, and assisted her in her last passage, for she died as holily as her great perseverance in virtue would lead us to hope.

Now, though our very honoured sister d'Auxerre had munificently endowed the foundation, still the community suffered much poverty at its commencement, inasmuch as her relations were dissatisfied with her good work, and seized her property. This made our Blessed Mother suffer severely, but she endured and surmounted it all with a generous humility, and showed great address in peaceably settling everything. During these trials she

tasted with much sweetness of the interior fruits of poverty. She was once so reduced as not to know where to obtain sufficient to feed her community, and laid her distress before God. While yet in prayer, a stranger rang at the door, and desired the sister to send for Madame de Chantal: when she arrived, he placed a piece of paper in her hand, without saying what it was, but added, "Madame, he who sends you this alms, begs your prayers," and immediately left. Our holy Mother returned to the community, as it was the hour of recreation; she had not yet opened her paper. She unfolded it in the presence of her sisters, and found two hundred and fifty francs. Her eyes immediately filled with tears, and she at once went with her daughters to return thanks to the Author of all good. At another time, being unable to purchase a silver pix, and grieved at seeing the Blessed Sacrament kept in one of tin, she begged the Divine Saviour, since He took such care of them, to take care of Himself, which He did, and when they thought least of it, a stranger rang at the door, who, without waiting to give a name, left a silver-gilt pix, with a request that it might be used as soon as possible. Our Blessed Mother remained nine months at Lyons, received seven religious, and endured many trials, from which new institutes are never exempt. She left our very honoured Mother Marie Jacqueline Faber as superioress, and our beloved Mother Marie Aimée de Blonay as her assistant and directress: and then returned, accompanied by our dear Sister Marie Hélène Da-

rères, at that time known as Madame de Vars, a widow, eminent for her piety and virtue, and a penitent of our Blessed Father.

CHAPTER X.

OUR BLESSED MOTHER SENDS TO MAKE A NEW FOUNDATION AT MOULINS; HER FIRMNESS AT THE DEATH OF HER SON AND DAUGHTER.

Our Blessed Mother had scarcely returned from Lyons, before, not only several maidens, but several entire cities, running after the odour of her virtues, demanded establishments of S. Mary; and if we had had enough religious, several houses which were founded years after, and some which are not yet commenced, would have been founded. This we know from a note written by our Blessed Father. "Truly the harvest is great; and we must trust to God for workmen. Toulouse, Moulins, Riom, Montbrison, Reims, wish for our daughters of S. Mary: our Mother is wished for everywhere." In another note written to our Blessed Mother, this holy prelate exclaimed: "Alas! my very dear Mother, I may say my only Mother, under what obligations are we to our Lord, and what confidence should we have in that which His mercy has commenced in us; He will complete it, and will give such increase to the small barrel of oil of our good will, that not only will all our own vessels be full, but many also of our neighbour's vessels, through the various

foundations we shall have to make." Our Mother, like the pious widow who obeyed the man of God, kept herself concealed from the eyes of the world, having her heart fixed on the Divine Goodness, and on the strict observance of the rule.

The year 1615 was thus finished, and 1616 had scarcely commenced, when our Blessed Lord visited her with a severe illness, caused, as it is supposed, by the fatigue she had experienced at Lyons. Moulins was very urgent in the following spring to have sisters for an establishment. Several letters passed on the subject of this foundation between our Blessed Father and His Eminence the Archbishop of Lyons, who at that time administered the See of Autun, on which Moulins depended. This great Cardinal commanded that our holy Mother should go to Moulins, to found a house similar to that erected at Lyons, by which the whole diocess was much edified. The Marshal de St. Gerans, Governor of the Bourbonnais, the Mayor, and Syndies, the Dean of Notre Dame, and the Rev. Father Rector of the Jesuits at Moulins, also wrote to our Blessed Father to ask for the establishment, imploring him to let Madame de Chantal come and plant this rich vine. Our Blessed Lord did not vouchsafe her sufficient health for this: so that, in order that no delay should be take place, our very honoured Sister and Mother Jeanne Charlotte de Bréchard left for Moulins on the 16th of July, 1616, with four companions, to found a new house there.

Thus Divine Providence permitted that the third Mother of the Institute should become superioress

of their third house, as the first and second were at Annecy and Lyons. Shortly before the departure of our dear sisters for Moulins, our holy Mother became much better; she took great pains, as much in building the convent as in strengthening the novices in every religious virtue, and almost all of them have done honour to the Institute as well as to the care which trained them.

It seemed that Divine Providence only gave health and strength to our Blessed Mother that she might be prepared to make a sacrifice of her own blood; her dear daughter the Baroness de Thorens was with her in Savoy. She was in the flower of her age, exceedingly beautiful, and possessing a sincere purity of heart and great piety, which she regulated according to the teaching laid down in the Introduction to a Devout Life. Our Blessed Father was not only her brother-in-law, but her confessor and spiritual father; and our holy Mother was not only her mother, but the directress of her soul. When her husband was absent, unless detained by any business, she retired to the convent, to be near her mother, and to become more deeply rooted in piety and in the exercises of devotion.

In the commencement of 1617, Baron de Thorens was ordered to Piedmont at the head of his regiment, when shortly after his arrival he was taken ill, and died a holy death in the camp, where our Blessed Father was wont to say there are such few saints. This death was severely felt by our holy mother, who loved this soldier as if he had been her only son; but she bore the

blow with that resignation to the Divine Will which always shone in her as a sacred lamp in the night of so many different afflictions.

The young baroness was at the convent when she heard of his death; she received the intelligence in a spirit of much resignation. She was *enceinte*, and had it not been for this, she would have immediately received the habit of S. Mary from the hands of her worthy mother, with whom she lived for five months. She was taken in the pains of labour when it was least expected. The imminent danger in which she was, prevented her being taken to the house which had been prepared for her; our Blessed Father did not desire it, and permitted several ladies to enter the convent. The poor widow was confined of a son, who received the grace that Job had asked, of being conveyed from his mother's womb to the grave; this little child had sufficient mortal life to be regenerated for an immortal one by the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, which was given him by his grandmother, in whose arms he expired; and it was very edifying to see her great strength and resignation. The Baroness herself prepared to follow her child into the other world; and as we have written her history at full length to be united to that of her mother, as a branch of gold which grew on that wonderful tree, we shall not speak here of her holy death, but only say that she received the habit of novice, made her profession, and died in the arms of our Blessed Mother, who had sufficient courage to close her eyes. She was buried

in the church of this convent, and was the first there interred.

After the interment of this amiable lady, who was buried in our habit, the enemy, jealous at the firmness displayed by our holy Mother, and annoyed that she had only blessed God in the death of her beloved daughter, tempted her severely; he suggested to her that she had not used sufficient water for her grand-son's baptism, and that she had not said the words necessary for holy baptism, and that therefore her imprudence would be the cause that this soul would never see God, and would eternally complain against her. This temptation afflicted our Blessed Mother so severely that she could not call to mind how she had baptised the infant. She sent for our Blessed Father, and throwing herself at his feet, all bathed in tears, asked penance for the fault which she believed that she had committed. As she repeated these words, "I, my Lord, have been the cause that a soul shall never see God," our Blessed Father said to her, "My Mother, how comes it that you are thinking of yourself? Have you still any self-interest left?" She then perceived that the violence of her temptation had arisen from thinking of herself. Her memory came back; and both the sisters who were present, as well as herself, recollected that she had thrown holy water on the little child, and had pronounced the sacred words ordered by Holy Church with great fervour. When our Blessed Mother spoke to us several years after on the imperfection of

contrition and sorrow for faults, she occasionally cited this example, and said that our Blessed Father had taught her, in regretting a sin committed, to think more of God, against whom it is committed, than of ourselves, who have committed it; and thus in the thought of offending so merciful and good a God, contrition is more sincere, the soul more purified, the mind more lightened, and the enemy has less opportunity to entangle the heart. This holy Mother added, that since that day this instruction of our Blessed Father had also served as a method for all her acts of contrition.

CHAPTER XI.

OUR BLESSED MOTHER MIRACULOUSLY CURED; SHE FOUNDS TWO HOUSES AT GRENOBLE AND BOURGES.

It was imagined a few weeks after the interment of Madame de Thorens that we should have followed our Blessed Mother to the grave. She was taken with a very severe fever. At the commencement of her illness she commanded the infirmarian to remind her sincerely of all her faults; she also ordered her to take care that no medicine of any value should be procured for her, as it would savour too much of worldly superfluities. She had the discourse of S. Bernard to the sick religious of Mont-Dieu read to her, and told the infirmarian, who was our very good Mother Peronne-Marie de Châtel, that although the coun-

sel of that great saint was not then observed to the letter, on account of the weakness of our nature, nevertheless every religious should have it continually before her when ill, to meditate thereon, and thus draw matter for humiliation, as well as motives to love suffering; for that however ill they might be, they suffered less than those holy personages. This affection for holy poverty and suffering was accompanied by such entire obedience, that she took and did all that the physician ordered her. It pleased God to bring her down to the gates of death, in order to raise her again; she received all the sacraments, and was so reduced as to be supposed to be in the last agony, when our Blessed Father was induced to give her some of the relics of S. Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, to whom he had made a vow. She took a long breath, which was supposed to be the last, as soon as she had swallowed these holy relics; but opening her eyes, she said to our Blessed Father, "I shall not die." "No, my child," replied he, "you will live for ever through the divine mercy." "I feel," said the convalescent, "that I am cured, and am quite well; thank God and His saints." At these words the holy prelate, who was surrounded by the whole community, entoned the "*Te Deum*," which they continued; and in a few days our holy Mother regained her strength, not being at all weak, as was generally the case; for the Physician who had cured her never works imperfect cures. If God restored her life and health,

it was to use them in the service of our Lord, like the mother-in-law of S. Peter.

In the commencement of February, 1618, our holy founder preached the Lent station at Grenoble, where he had already preached it before. As soon as he arrived at Grenoble, he was solicited for some of his daughters of the Visitation of S. Mary. Four young ladies of Grenoble had already received the habit from our Blessed Mother, in order to facilitate the establishment of the institution in that city. Our Blessed Father accordingly commanded our Mother to come to him, and to bring with her several sisters to found an establishment, as well as the four novices received for this intention. Our Blessed Mother arrived at Grenoble, accompanied by her religious, on the 6th of April, the eve of Palm Sunday, 1618. The Bishop of Chalcedon, coadjutor to the Bishop of Grenoble, received our Blessed Mother, and in conjunction with the clergy, offered her every assistance. This good and holy prelate was so edified, that on the morrow he expressed a wish to hear their confessions, which he did, and was so pleased, that he said he had never met with such consciences. His Lordship distributed the palms to the religious, said mass, gave communion to the community, and exposed the Blessed Sacrament. The establishment commenced on that day. Our Blessed Mother stayed about six weeks at Grenoble, during which time she saw several houses, for the purpose of purchasing one, and not finding one that would suit her, they determined to buy a place called

Charlemont, high on a retired situation, though within the precincts of the city. She acknowledged, that though they would be inconvenienced by having to build, still they would be recompensed by the tranquillity they would enjoy. She at the same time received several novices, appointed our very honoured Mother Peronne-Marie de Châtel as superioress, and returned to Annecy, accompanied by our dear sister and mother Claude Agnes de la Roche.

She had only been home about a fortnight when she received letters requiring her to start immediately for Bourges. She left directly, accompanied by some of the sisters, and visiting on the way our houses at Lyons and Moulins, arrived safely at Bourges. She was received with great solemnity in the church, and the grand vicar ascending the pulpit, congratulated the people on having so holy a woman among them, and saying that the comet which had appeared two days before our holy Mother's arrival was typical of her; for that this star announced to them the blessing they would have in possessing for a few days so great a servant of God. The establishment was formed amid the congratulations of the people, and our Blessed Mother remained six months in this new house in great poverty, for though her only brother, the Archbishop, had ordered that nothing should be wanting, still God allowed that the negligence of his officers should frequently give our saint the opportunity of practising the virtue of poverty. They were sometimes without bread for dinner; but she ex

horted the sisters to go to the refectory at the hour ordered by the rule, and to eat only their soup. It happened once or twice that just as the *Benedicite* had been said, the bell was rung, aud some ladies, unacquainted with them, brought each of the sisters a loaf of fresh bread. Our holy Mother was unwilling that his grace the Archbishop should be made acquainted with the negligence of his officers, as she wished not to be importunate, and moreover, to suffer something for the sake of our Lord; indeed, she was greatly annoyed at the attention her brother desired should be paid her while she resided at Bourges. She wrote of it to our Blessed Father, who replied, that she must act with perfect liberty of conscience, and without scruple; that all that was suffered through obedience, though unpleasant, could not but be profitable, and that therefore she should use without ceremony the viands that the Archbishop of Bourges sent her. She received several novices during her residence, whom she grounded in great fervour and obedience.

Our Blessed Father was at this time at Paris, where he commanded her to join him, in order to gratify the wish of many to have a house of the Visitation there. Yet he added, that there were innumerable obstacles in the way, but that God would overcome them all: "Let us then, my dearest mother, being convinced of this, take fresh courage, or rather let us renew our former courage, to perform wonders in the service of God and our little congregation, which

is His also." When the Archbishop perceived that his sister, whom he desired to keep yet longer at Bourges, was preparing to go to Paris, he opposed her intention. She remonstrated with him, but without effect. At last, when the day of her departure had arrived, he came and told her that they would not be able to go, as he had forbidden their having carriages. Whereon she replied, "What does that matter, my Lord? if there is no carriage for us, obedience has got good legs; we can walk famously." Her determination touched the prelate, who lent her his carriage as far as Paris. She left our very dear Sister Anne Marie Rosset as superior at Bourges, and left with her four professed sisters and a novice, whom she had sent for from Moulins. She went away delighted at being called on to serve God, and in the spirit of obedience, for she started for Paris with only nineteen silver pence, and on the way exhorted her companions to the love of suffering, and the entire trusting to God and His providence, without telling them of any of the crosses she anticipated at Paris; for our Blessed Father had given her this charge, and she rejoiced thereat.

CHAPTER XII.

OUR BLESSED MOTHER FOUNDS A HOUSE AT PARIS; HER PATIENCE AND HUMILITY IN THE VARIOUS TRIALS SHE THERE MET WITH.

Our Blessed Mother and her daughters arrived at Paris on the eve of Quasimodo, 1619. She was not disappointed in her expectation of meeting with crosses; for God permitted that this house should have many obstacles to overcome, inasmuch as He had predestined that it should be one of the most flourishing in the order of Mary, in the abundance of its graces. Not a few opposed our manner of living, and that not only among the worldly, but even religious of great merit; and in order, as they said, to make our manner of life less taking in Paris, they resolved that we should only be received in that city to superintend the Andriettes and the daughters of S. Magdalene, who are Penitents. A Rev. Father, belonging to a religious order, and who died a short time since in the odour of sanctity, informed our Blessed Mother of this resolution, as he was himself of this mind, and told her it was by no means wished that we should found a house at Paris, but rather that we should undertake the management of such congregations as were not well regulated; and that if we were unwilling to accept this, we must return whence we had come. She replied with

much humility: "We shall then return rather than break our rules and our institute; we are only determined to do the will of God; He sent for us here; if it pleases Him that we should return, we shall have obeyed Him in both ways." This manner of looking at the subject showed the good father that the spirit of Jesus was in the congregation of S. Mary; so that he changed his note from that day, and was as zealous in forwarding the views of our institute as he had before been in hindering it. This was exceedingly serviceable to us, inasmuch as his influence was very great, on account of the esteem in which he was held, and his opinion drew several others after him. He said openly and boldly, that the Mother de Chantal was guided by the Spirit of God; that He had brought her to Paris to bring about the conversion of several souls; thus gradually all opposition ceased, and our Blessed Father fixed on a day to commence the Institute. He thus wrote to our Blessed Mother: "How admirable, forsooth, my dear mother, is human prudence! would you believe it, that several servants of God have told me that the mildness and piety of our institute is so much to the taste of the French, that you will be more popular than all the other religious houses, and that no one else is thought of when once Madame de Chantal has been seen? This, however, is of no consequence; God, who sees all, and who knows that we did not come to Paris to be seen, but to show how souls can live in His service, God, I say, will aid us. I can answer for your sincerity as well as I can for my own, if

such words as *thine* and *mine* are to pass between you and me, for God has united us to pay Him the same service."

On the festival of S. James and S. Philip, (1st of May, 1619,) our Blessed Father said mass in the chapel attached to the house where our sisters had retired, preached, and exposed the Blessed Sacrament, and that day was reckoned as the day of our establishment at Paris. Our good sisters were located in the Faubourg S. Michel, in a small and inconvenient house, placed between two tennis-courts, where the noise of the players was continually heard. They met with some in this place who desired to be religious, but had not the courage to persevere. They had borrowed some beds and other furniture for our sisters, for which they were obliged to pay immediately, to avoid all inconvenience. It seemed as if God delighted in keeping our good mother in a state of poverty; for amid the luxury and wealth of Paris she had not sufficient linen for change.

It also happened that the sisters whom she had brought with her were taken ill, and there were only two young novices with herself to chant the office, to answer the bell, to serve in the sacristy, and to attend to the sick. Our Blessed Mother took all these duties on herself, prepared dinner, served in the infirmary, chanted the office with her two novices in so loud a tone, that it might be supposed that the choir was full. They spent three months in this small house, after which they obliged to change,

owing to the number of novices that offered themselves. There were, however, many difficulties in the way, nevertheless our Lord assisted His servant as He had always done, and after having exercised her patience, sent her assistance in novices who were of good family. But just as we were making some little progress, God permitted the plague to break out in Paris; the court and the principal persons left, so that this little world became a perfect desert, as the grass grew in the streets. Our house was very poor, and our holy mother has often told us, that not knowing what to do, nor how to feed the sisters, she often went with tears into the presence of the Blessed Sacrament to say a Pater, demanding daily bread for her daughters from our Heavenly Father. God vouchsafed to her great and remarkable blessings after all these trials, especially in the reception of our very honoured Sister Hélène Angelique l'Huillier, to whom Providence gave a most extraordinary vocation; she became the foundress of the order at Paris, relinquishing, however, all the privileges to her Sister Madame de Villeneuve. The stables of the Hôtel de Zamet were accordingly purchased and fitted up as a residence by our Blessed Mother. Noble ladies and princesses visited her, and became so attached to her, that several were directed by her advice respecting the guidance of their soul. Madame la Comtesse de S. Paul wished to have a foundation at Orleans. This was the ninth, the seventh, and eighth having been founded at Monferrand and

Nevers, by our houses at Lyons and Moulins. Our Blessed Father sent our very dear Sister and Mother Claude Agnes de la Roche with four companions to Orleans; thus was this establishment formed; and as our very dear Sister Claude Agnes de la Roche had been the ninth daughter of the institute, by a trick of chance she was the first mother of this ninth house.

The chief trial which our Blessed Mother had to support during her residence at Paris, was on the part of one who had been exceedingly kind to her at the commencement of the institute; she being much annoyed at our Blessed Mother for not permitting her to act in a way contrary to our rule, and the well-being of a religious house. She therefore opposed every action performed by the saint, and deterred several from coming to us, and would, in all probability, have caused our very honoured Sister Hélène Angelique l'Huillier to lose her vocation. Although this person often insulted our Blessed Mother, calling her ungrateful, and saying all that was suggested to her by passion, yet she was unable to irritate her, for, on leaving the parlour, the saint would say to the sister who accompanied her, "Let us go and recommend this dear soul to God," without hinting at the manner in which she had been treated; and when she was taken ill, our Mother waited on her as if she had been one of her best friends.

At the end of the year 1621, our holy Mother thought of leaving Paris, and going to labour elsewhere, seeing that the house was now flourish-

ing, both in temporal and spiritual matters; but our Lord interfered by casting her on a bed of sickness for a period of three months. On her recovery, she presided at the election of a superioress, and the lot happily fell on our beloved Sister Anne Catherine de Beaumont, under whose charge she left a community of thirty-four religious, all worthy of their vocation. As soon as it was known that our Blessed Mother desired to leave Paris, everything was done to detain her, but in vain; for though many were deeply attached to her, she only thought of doing the work which God had intrusted to her as diligently and carefully as she could for His glory, and without any other desire than that of pleasing God.

CHAPTER XIII.

OUR BLESSED MOTHER VISITS SEVERAL RELIGIOUS HOUSES WHILE ON THE WAY TO THE FOUNDATIONS OF ORLEANS, BOURGES, NEVERS, AND MOULINS; SHE ALSO STAYS SOME LITTLE TIME WITH HER DAUGHTER MADAME DE TOULONJON, AND GOES THENCE TO FOUND A HOUSE OF HER ORDER AT DIJON.

Thus she bade adieu to Paris, and left, notwithstanding the severity of the winter, on the 21st of February, 1622, accompanied by our dear sister Gaspard d'Avise, and another lady, of uncommon graces, a spiritual daughter of our Blessed Father, of whom he was wont to say,

that she had neither the heart, spirit, or courage of her sex, being so far advanced, and of such lofty attainments, in the service of God. This lady desired to become a nun of the Visitation, but being when very young bound to another religion, our Blessed Father and our worthy Mother practised great self-denial in this; "For," wrote our Blessed Father to Rev. Father Binet, S. J., "though our Mother de Chantal and myself are convinced that a soul might be thoroughly sanctified in the Visitation, still if this lady is called elsewhere, and will be useful to another congregation, we would not take her thence." On leaving Paris, this lady conducted our Blessed Mother to a convent she had the intention of reforming. She kept her for four days to speak to the religious, and counsel her as to the reform and regulations of the monastic exercises. Our holy Mother was attacked with a slight cold while there, whereon this lady bled her with her own hands, and soaked as many pieces of linen as she could in her blood. At each repast she changed her napkins, in order to keep them as so many relics.

Had not the will of God prevented her, she would have followed our Blessed Mother, who, on leaving this abbey, went to Pontoise. She was received by the Carmelites with such kindness, that she wrote to our dear sister the superioress of Paris, saying, that she lived among these good servants of God with the same frankness as in one of our own communities; and these

good Mothers on their side wrote, that it seemed to them as if they had among them their holy Mother Teresa of Jesus. Several conferred with her on the state of their souls. She had great devotion at the tomb of the Blessed Sister Mary of the Incarnation ;* then having taken her leave of these holy religious, she went to our house at Orleans, where she received great consolation from the devout and good conduct of our very dear Sister and Mother Claude Agnès de la Roche. She visited also a house of Benedictinesses, according to their desire ; and these good nuns sat up all night conversing with her on the state of their souls, and learning from her true religious maxims. While some were speaking with our Blessed Mother, the others requested our two sisters who had accompanied her to speak to their novices. From Orleans she went to Bourges, to establish our dear sister Françoise Gabrielle Bally as superioress ; she was elected in the room of our very dear Anne Marie Rosset, who was wanted at the foundation of Dijon. On her return she visited Nevers and Moulins, strengthening our good sisters in perfection and the ob-

* The Blessed Sister Mary of the Incarnation, foundress of the Carmelites in France, was born at Paris, February 1, 1565. She was the only daughter of Nicholas Avrillat, lord of Champlatreux, and of Marie l'Huillier. She married M. Acarie when she was eighteen years old. After the death of her husband, she was professed in the convent of the Carmelites at Amiens, as a lay-sister, and died in the convent of Pontoise, April 18, 1618. Her tomb then became renowned for the miracles which God vouchsafed there. Pius VI. beatified her May 29, 1791. Her relics, which escaped the profanations of the French Revolution, were solemnly re-interred in 1822 in the chapel of the Carmelites of Pontoise.

servance of our rule. Thence, in obedience to our Holy Father, she went to Allonne, on a visit to her daughter, Madame de Toulonjon, where she spent a few days, waiting for the sisters whom our Blessed Father intended to send from Annecy for the foundation of Dijon.

Her visit to Madame de Toulonjon was not without fruit; several ladies visited her, and were much edified with her conversation. A religious who spoke to her at that time, acknowledged several years after that she had never forgotten the instructions she then heard; and even regretted not having it in her power to become a daughter of so holy a mother. As to her dear daughter, Madame de Toulonjon, who had only been married a few years, words would be wanting to say how joyfully she received our dear mother, and gave her hospitality. Although *enceinte*, she went on her knees to meet her Blessed Mother, without any one being able to hinder her; she had already been twice confined prematurely, of two sons, one of whom only lived three weeks, and the other a fortnight, and there was reason to fear that it might be so now, but this was not the case, as she was confined of a daughter, who is still living, although three children she had afterwards died in the state of innocence. So when this virtuous lady, then a widow, returned from Pignerol with a son only six weeks old, she often took him to receive his grandmother's benediction, in order, as she said, that she who had preserved the life of the daughter, might also preserve that of the son, as was the case.

Our sisters, whom our Blessed Mother expected at Allonne, having arrived, she started for Dijon. She arrived there in April, and was received with such joy, that some Peers of the Parliament, who had opposed our Institute, were quite astonished thereat; they acknowledged that there was some special interference of Heaven turning the hearts of those very people who had only greeted the foundations of other convents with clamour and curses. And indeed the merchants and shopkeepers closed their shops, and each one showed such joy, that our Blessed Mother and the sisters who were with her have assured us that they neither heard nor felt the movement of the carriage; it seemed as if these good people carried them in their arms; so that it took much time to make little way. In the evening, after the citizens had seen our holy Mother, there came an innocent company of peasants from the environs of Dijon, to welcome our Blessed Mother, who was so well pleased, that she sent for our sisters, and made them unveil themselves, in order to receive these visitants yet more cordially. She was very kind to these people; and after having exhorted them to live in the fear of God, and to gain heaven, she dismissed them, not, however, until they had received her benediction, as they knelt down, and would not stir until she had bestowed it.

On the morrow, the 8th of May, 1622, the vicar-general acting on the part of the bishop of Langres, who was absent, opened the establishment, which was done with much solemnity. A short time after our beloved sister, Clare Marie

Parise, and another, whose name is not mentioned, received the habit. The reception of these two beloved sisters induced others to follow their example. But of all those who placed themselves under so holy a guide, God led by a special grace Madame Le Grand, who was seventy-five or seventy-six years of age. While our Blessed Mother was in the world, she honoured as a mother the very lady who now came to supplicate on her knees, and in all humility, to be received as her daughter and novice. The Rev. Mother received her with great gratitude towards God, who had given to the institute so perfect a soul, and one who entered religion with so total an oblivion of all she had been in the world, that she only loved to work in the garden, desiring to be allowed to make her own bed, and to be treated as the rest of the community. She said to our sisters, that she had for several years deemed herself unworthy to untie the shoelatchets of our dear Mother. This beloved sister died in our convent at Dijon, very holily, and more than eighty years of age.

A few months after our establishment at Dijon, the Bishop of Langres, like a good shepherd, seeking the greater perfection of his sheep, desired to reform the Bernardines of Tart, and judging that none was better adapted to commence so holy a work than our Blessed Mother, for whom he entertained no common esteem, he persuaded one of these ladies to go and stay some time with her, as if it were only to take a little recreation ; but our affectionate Mother, who was expert in the discernment of spirits, seeing in

this lady some special qualities for promoting the glory of God, so won her to a devout life, that she who before had nothing so much at heart as to have her religious profession declared null and void, now thought only of the reform of her convent, and willingly took part in that good work with the coadjutress. They sent for several of their religious to come and reside with our sisters, to initiate them in conventual practices; and two of our community remained at Tart for seven or eight months, by order of our holy Mother, to aid these good ladies in their designs. This good mother counselled them to adopt the Reform, which a pious abbess was then establishing, and in this they ever after persevered. Our Blessed Mother spent six months at Dijon, where she purchased a house for her religious. She received several novices, grounded them in obedience, elected as superior our very honoured Mother Jacqueline Faber, whom our Blessed Father had sent for from Monferrand, and left that town filled with the odour of her great and exalted virtues; and on her part she was not a little consoled at seeing a house of her order established in her native town.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LAST INTERVIEW AT LYONS BETWEEN OUR HOLY FOUNDER AND OUR BLESSED MOTHER.

She arrived at Lyons at the end of October, and there found our Blessed Father, who merely passed through in company with the Cardinal of Savoy, to Avignon; so that they had no leisure to speak to each other. She was, however, ordered to visit the convents of Monferrand and S. Etienne, which she did, making there the renewal of her vows, and her annual retreat. She returned to Lyons about the commencement of December, where our Blessed Father had already arrived; the king and the two queens were there, as well as the Cardinal of Savoy. So great a number of the nobility had recourse to our Blessed Father as to an oracle, that this holy man had not even a quarter of an hour to speak to our holy Mother; she had, however, a great desire to make a review of her soul, and to converse with her holy director, whom she had not seen for three years and a half; moreover, she had several questions to ask him respecting the observance, ceremonies, and property of the institute, of which she had taken notes at Paris and Dijon.

Being one day disengaged from his other business, he sent for our Blessed Mother to the parlour, and said to her: "We have now a few hours to ourselves, which of us shall speak

first?" Our Blessed Mother, who was eager, and more anxious about her soul than anything else, replied with quickness, "I shall, if such be your will; my heart has great want of being reviewed by you." Our Blessed Father, who was near his consummation, not wishing to see any eagerness, though on spiritual subjects, in her whom he desired to be all perfect, replied in a gentle but serious tone of voice, "What! are you still eager, and have you a choice of your own? I hoped to have found you altogether angelic." Knowing, however, that our Blessed Mother was one of that class of perfect souls of whom S. Bernard speaks, who have no need to be directed, God being their guide, he continued, "We shall speak of ourselves at Annecy; let us now finish the business of our Congregation. Oh, how I do love our little institute, because God is so loved in it!" Our Blessed Mother, without replying a word, attempted to forget all that she had prepared to speak of, and only mentioned such matters as were connected with the institute. These two noble souls were four hours together conversing on different matters which they were to insert in the Book of Customs; our Blessed Father especially desired that we should not think of putting ourselves under the direction of a general; that moreover he prayed, and he believed that such was the will of God, that we should be simply and solely under the conduct of the Holy See, and the bishops, in whose dioceses we should be established; "For you see," said he, "that our daughters are the daughters of the clergy."

After this interview of four hours, our Blessed Father ordered her to go and visit our sisters at Grenoble, and if possible at Valence, and then return by Belley, and that thus she would have also all the houses at that time established; he also ordered her to see a house at Chambéry which was proposed for our Institute, and to visit the Bernardines at Rumilly, who had commenced their reform under the direction of our Blessed Father. Thus she left Lyons with his benediction, hoping to see him again soon at Annecy, and went to our convent at Grenoble. While on her road, she grieved much that our Blessed Father had not permitted her to speak to him of herself, but without reflecting, or even censuring what her director had done, she resigned herself to the Divine Will, and taking up her psalter, commenced chanting the twenty-sixth Psalm, "*Dominus illuminatio mea*," repeating several times the verse, "*Quoniam pater meus et Mater mea dereliquerunt me, Dominus autem assumpsit me.*" She thus regained her spirits, and this was her ordinary remedy in her interior trials, to abandon herself into the hands of God by repeating a few verses of Holy Writ. She arrived at Grenoble a few days before the Festival of the Nativity of our Lord, in time to make a brief retreat.

It happened that on the festival of the Holy Innocents, while engaged in prayer for our Blessed Father, she heard a very distinct voice, which said to her, "He is no more," *(Il n'est plus.)* "No, my God," she replied, "he is no more; he

lives no more, but it is Thou who art, and who livest in him;" regarding these words, "he is no more," as signifying the perfection of transformation into God whereat she believed this holy man had arrived; but in truth it was a warning that he was no longer on earth, nor in the state in which she had recommended him to God. Our holy mother, reflecting on these words, imagined that it might possibly be a warning of his death; but as we are ever unwilling to persuade ourselves of the truth of that which we fear, she would in no way indulge such a thought, and left quite joyously for Grenoble, where she was delighted with all that she saw, it being under the direction of our very honoured Mother Peronne-Marie de Châtel. Our Blessed Mother was accompanied by M. Michel Faber, who, having been informed of the decease of our Blessed Father, was very solicitous that the news should not reach our mother. She arrived at Belley two days before the festival of the Epiphany. This dear community was already aware that we had lost our holy father; but our beloved Sister Marie Madelaine de Mouxy, the then superioress, commanded her daughters not to evince their sorrow in the presence of our holy mother, who spent that day and the vigil of the Epiphany in great joy.

On the festival the Capuchin Fathers came to see her. After having conversed with them on the mystery of that great festival, she expressed her astonishment at not having had any intelligence of our Blessed Father. M. Faber replied that he had just heard that he had

been taken ill at Lyons; whereon she replied, that in that case she would set off on her way thither the next day. The good M. Faber, who had been her confessor during the last eleven or twelve years, well knew that she received every intelligence, no matter how distressing, peaceably, if presented in the chalice of the will of God; he therefore said to her, "We must, my dear mother, will what God wills; be then so obliging as to read this letter;" and he placed in her hand one that the Bishop of Geneva, (of happy memory) brother and successor of our Blessed Father, had written to him. She was informed in the letter how God had called to Himself this holy prelate; and I cannot better represent the solid virtue with which our Blessed Mother received this mortal blow, than in copying what she herself wrote to one of our superioresses; "When M. Faber put into my hand the letter from the Bishop of Geneva, my heart palpitated exceedingly. I threw myself on God and His holy will, convinced that this letter conveyed some melancholy intelligence. During the short interval that I was in prayer, I understood the sense of the words that I had heard at Grenoble, *He is no more;* a truth on which I was enlightened on reading this blessed letter. I threw myself on my knees in adoration of the Divine Providence. I wept the whole of that day and night until after communion, yet my grief was exceedingly calm, and I resigned myself with great tranquillity to the Divine will. For God vouchsafed me much light on the gifts and graces which the

Divine Majesty had conferred on our Father, and also a great desire on my part to live as this man of God had directed me; this is in reply to what you, my dear child, wished to know of my misery."

A religious having found her weeping, enquired of her whether perfect resignation ought not to dry up her tears; to which she replied; "Father, were I assured that my tears were disagreeable to God, I would not shed one;" and then, by a wonderful constraint of power over herself, she forbade her tears to flow; but this violence to nature caused her body to swell in such a manner, as to induce M. Faber to command her to give free vent to her feelings; for the father, said he, does not expect the child to have no feeling when it is struck, but only requires submission. On the evening that she received this melancholy intelligence she retired to rest before supper; the superioress ordered them to take her something cooked with sugar; but the sister, misunderstanding the command, instead of sugar used a great quantity of salt, the half of which our Blessed Mother ate through obedience, without perceiving whether it was salt or sugar. She left one half, as being unable to eat more. The superioress tasted it to see if it had been well done, and finding it as salt as brine, she asked our Blessed Mother if it had not inconvenienced her, but her reply was, that she was in such a state that she found nothing sweet but the will of God, and nothing bitter but her grief. She went to recreation that evening with

her sisters, but was unable to speak, crying the whole time. After recreation she retired, said matins with our beloved Sister Marie Gaspard d'Avise, her companion, made her read aloud a chapter of the Imitation of Christ, and then went to rest, wishing to be alone with our Lord; but shortly after she had retired, our dear Sister Marie Simplicienne Fardel entered her room, and spent the night upon her knees before her bed, speaking with her of her last interview with our Blessed Father, and how she had predicted to him his death, when he passed through Belley with the cardinal of Savoy.

Our Blessed Mother rose on the following morning with the community, though she had not closed her eyes all night, and after Holy Communion, with a tranquil mind, though much distressed, she replied to the Bishop of Geneva, wrote to our beloved Sister Françoise Marguerite Favrot, at that time assistant in the convent at Annecy, and to our very honoured Mother de Blonay, superioress of our house at Lyons, beseeching her to obtain possession of the body of our Blessed Father. "I beseech and implore of you," said she, "and if I dared, I would command you." She then very peaceably transacted her business at Belley, spoke with the sisters, presided at the change of the officers, received visits, wrote several letters, and having taken leave of her sisters, whom she exhorted to persevere in the spirit of their holy founder, she left for Chambéry, to select a house for our institute. She would not accept one offered by Madame la Marquise de la Chambre, foreseeing

that she would have to dispute it with the Marquis d'Aix, her nephew. "This house," said she, "is large and convenient, but we are daughters of peace and humility; our humility will not allow us to contend with the great men of the world." She went from here to the Bernardines of Rumilly, who had commenced their reform; she remained there five or six days, until the Bishop of Geneva commanded her to return to Annecy; and some of these good mothers would have remained some time among us, to learn the conventual practices and exercises, had not the Bishop of Geneva decided that it would be better to send them two of our sisters, who remained with them six months, as much to draw up their spiritual rules, as to regulate their ceremonies and offices, and all the exterior arrangements of a religious house.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BODY OF OUR HOLY FOUNDER BROUGHT FROM LYONS TO ANNECY; OUR BLESSED MOTHER GOES TO MOULINS.

Several of our friends went to meet our Blessed Mother as she drew near to Annecy, but she was unable to speak to them, except by her tears and a few short expressions, expressing her adoration of the will of God, and her submission to His Divine dispositions. Her return to her dear daughters was not as in days of yore, in joy and gladness; and being unable to speak to her dear chil-

dren, deprived of so holy a father, she took them to pray awhile in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. On the morrow she made every preparation to receive the blessed body of this holy prelate, to provide for his interment; she also collected and locked up all that he had used, as also his MSS.

The body of our Blessed Father arrived from Lyons; and after the chapter of S. Peter's had paid him the honours commanded by the Church, he was brought into our chapel, and laid for three months near our grating, until a convenient spot was selected for his tomb. His holy daughter remained as long as she could near his coffin, and sought not in vain for flames from this phœnix of love, for she received many graces from him, who was no less her father in heaven than he had been on earth; and as the blessed Father had told her at Lyons, that when he should be at Annecy, she should give an account of her soul, wishing to obey him now that he was dead as if he had been alive; she spent a whole day in laying this account before him. Kneeling down by his coffin, she spoke to him as if he had been present; and if she heard not with her outer ears his voice, she listened to him in her heart. Not only did this great Elias cast over her the mantle of his paternal protection, but it is very probable that she obtained much of his spirit in directing the institute, the care of which he had bequeathed to her, while its foundations were in a few years to be so multiplied.

Her tranquillity, and the peace gained in the vicinity of his remains, were interrupted by her

being compelled to go to Moulins to set that convent in order, and to remedy the troubles caused to the religious by the Foundress; and this she effected by her prudence. She returned by way of Lyons, where she venerated with great devotion the heart of our Blessed Father, which reposed in the church of our convent of Belle-Cour. She here renewed her vows, and especially that of purity of heart, and ever to perform that which she should believe to be the most agreeable to the will of God. She heard from Mother de Blonay of all that had passed at the decease of our Blessed Father, making her repeat all that he had said and done, and taking care that notes should be taken to be used afterwards for his Life. She was told that he had said in his last conversation, that if he had been a religious, and not a priest, he would not communicate oftener than the others, and would do nothing more than the rest of the community. On her return to Annecy she believed herself obliged to act in conformity with the sentiments of our Blessed Father, and besought the Bishop of Geneva to dispense her from daily communion, which she had practised for fourteen years; he did not, however, yield to her request, inasmuch as she communicated daily by the command and direction of his holy brother; he replied, that she should attach herself rather to what the saint had marked out for her particular direction, than to his general intentions for the whole Institute. She accordingly submitted to this, and continued, as she had always done, her communions.

She sent some sisters in 1623, for the foundation of our convent at Marseilles, which was the first established after the decease of our Blessed Father. She also made her first annual visit to this convent, instructing the sisters how they should behave in these visits, and what the order of things in them should be. Our Blessed Mother ended this year, after so many holy works undertaken for the good of our institute, by one, the injury of which to ourselves we feel, and shall ever feel. The bishop of Geneva, on looking over his holy brother's papers, had found a quantity of our Blessed Mother's letters; well knowing that they contained the most secret thoughts of her soul, he, with incomparable delicacy, sent them all to her, and she immediately burnt them, without our sisters being able to prevent her. Michel Faber, of whom we have above spoken, has assured us that our holy Father had taken the trouble to place all her letters on one side as useful for her Life, and had made some observations on several of them, intending, when he should have more leisure by retiring from his see, to write a memoir of what he knew of this holy soul; but God saw fit to deprive us of all these advantages.

CHAPTER XVI.

OUR BLESSED MOTHER DRAWS UP, WITH SEVERAL OF OUR MOTHERS, OUR COUTUMIER, ACCORDING TO THE WORDS OF OUR HOLY FOUNDER; HER FIRMNESS IN ALL BUSINESS CONNECTED WITH THE INSTITUTE.

The year 1624 commenced with the foundation of our convent at Chambéry. The Prince Thomas, who had ever honoured our mother with an affection full of tender piety, sent his carriage for her, and wished, by an excess of holy benevolence, to meet her with his court, the clergy, and the senate; but she so earnestly entreated him to allow, as she said, the little of the earth to enter the town with a becoming littleness, that he did not press her further, preferring to sacrifice his own desire rather than do violence to the humility of our saint. But he had the Blessed Sacrament exposed in their chapel before their arrival; "For," said he, "Madame de Chantal will be delighted at finding our Lord waiting for her in her house, for this will give her more real delight than anything else that we could do." He met her at the door of the chapel, into which he introduced her, making four of his pages walk before with lighted flambeaux. The music played, and the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given, and thus the establishment was formed. It was the festival of the Great S. Anthony, to whom our Blessed Mother had a peculiar devotion; she was de-

lighted in placing this convent under the protection of so holy an abbot and perfect a religious. The Prince Thomas gave a supper to our Blessed Mother and her daughters; and he sent them such abundance of provision, that it fed their community for eight days; and in addition to this, enabled them to let the poor share their festivity. He gave them some very handsome presents for the altar, and ever afterwards favoured and protected the Visitation. Our Blessed Mother remained nearly four months at Chambéry; during which she received many novices, of whom several have served, or are still living to serve, their houses.

She returned to Annecy a little before Pentecost, to hold chapter of the superioresses of the order, and left as assistant at Chambéry, instead of a superioress, our very dear Sister Marie Anne Fichet. A few days after the festival, the mothers whom she had summoned arrived, and were received with much cordiality by our Blessed Mother. They commenced by drawing up the Coutumier, containing the Directory, the Ceremonial, the Formulary, and other advice useful for religious perfection. Our Blessed Father had prepared notes for all this in Latin and French; it had been put into practice at Annecy, there being no time to write it; and as there was no hurry, the simple command was regarded as a rule by our first mothers and sisters.

On every occasion our Blessed Mother quoted our holy founder, as she had no wish to establish anything in our Institute by her own

authority; and though the superioresses begged of her to act as the foundress of the congregation, she replied: "Not so, but since it is your wish, I shall regard myself as the elder sister of the family, who was more on intimate terms with our Father than the rest of you." To use more circumspection in the compiling of this book, she requested the assistance of two Fathers of the Jesuit College at Chambéry, as also of M. Michel Faber, our confessor, to consult the bishop of Geneva, (of happy memory) without whose authority she would do nothing. As soon as the *Coutumier* had been fairly copied out, our Blessed Mother, accompanied by all the superioresses and elder sisters, whom she had sent for, laid the volume on our Blessed Father's tomb, praying herself with many tears, and commanding her daughters to do so likewise, that our Blessed Father would show her if she had inserted therein a word contrary to his wishes, and if such had been the case, she besought him to obtain its erasure from God. It pleased the Divine Majesty, however, to give her and the rest an interior persuasion, that everything contained in that book was truly in accordance with the will of our Blessed Father. They then arose, quite consoled, from their knees, and assembled in chapter to read its contents to all present; the sisters then drew up a capitulary act, by which they acknowleged all that they had just heard read to be conformable to that which our Blessed Father had commanded to be practised in that convent. Finally, our Blessed Mother

prayed his Lordship the bishop of Geneva to give his sanction thereto, which he did, as may still be seen in the aforesaid *Coutumier*. This business being so happily finished, each of these good superioresses retired to their convents, separating from our Blessed Mother with as much regret as they had found pleasure and satisfaction in her dear society.

It had happened that our convent at Grenoble, unacquainted with our Blessed Father's determination, that no superioress could be re-elected at the end of their second triennium as superioress of the same house, re-elected to her very great sorrow our very good Mother Peronne-Marie de Chatel; but as they had not yet seen the *Coutumier*, they would not listen to her reasons, attributing them to her humility. Our Blessed Mother decided in the chapter that this election was null and void, though no possible censure could be attached to the community at Grenoble, inasmuch as they were ignorant of the intention of our Blessed Father, and she turned a deaf ear to every plea that could be adduced. At the same time she ordered four or five of our superioresses who were returning to France, to obtain the nullity of this election from their father-director. But their petitions, though demanded on their knees, were unavailing with him, whereon our Blessed Mother herself came to Grenoble. The dear Mother Péronne-Marie de Châtel had left her convent in the month of August, 1624, to go to make a foundation at Aix; but she was obliged to assure her sisters that she would again return to them. Our Blessed Mother therefore took steps during her absence to attain

her object; she perceived that the directress and the novices were too much attached to the superioress, and that their influence was too great with their relatives, who were the principal persons in the city, so that she would have no help from them. Accordingly she proceeded to the novitiate, and finding the mistress looking rather pale, she decided that she was ill, and sent her to the infirmary, acting as mistress of the novices in her place. By this means all influence was destroyed; after which she spoke to the father-director, laying before him the necessity of invalidating the election. He who had opposed so many others, was entirely gained over by her prudence and humility; for he said that he never intended to set at nought the rules of the institute, and that if, as universal mother of the order, she was of opinion that the election was invalid, she might command that which she deemed to be the best, and he was quite ready to obey him. Our Blessed Mother replied, that she had no authority, but that she besought him who was superior to proceed to a new election; which he accordingly did. After having spent three months at Grenoble, she left that community in peace, and returned to pass the year here at Annecy.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FOUNDATIONS CONTINUE; OUR BLESSED MOTHER RECEIVED WITH GREAT HONOUR AT BESANCON.

Immediately after the decease of our Blessed Father, our Lord manifested his sanctity by the miracles which were worked, as well at his shrine as in various other places, by his invocation, and by the application of his relics. This was a subject of greater consolation to our Blessed Mother than we can well express. She had already procured a commission from the Chamber of Council, ordering the Rev. Father Juste Guérin, Barnabite, at present our very honoured and worthy bishop, to go in company with M. Ducret, to Chablais, Ternier, Gaillard, and other places at a greater distance, to enquire into the sanctity of his life, and the miracles worked by our Blessed Father. In the year 1625 this Blessed Mother, who provided all the money necessary for so arduous an undertaking, with an anxiety and generosity that no difficulty could defeat, persuaded the bishop of Geneva to go to Rome, to hasten the Apostolical letters necessary to institute the requisite process, enquiring into the sanctity of our deceased Father's life. It was now that she put in order the *Entretiens* and *Sermons* of our Blessed Father, which she had collected; collecting also the *Missive Letters* which he had written, for the purpose of having them

printed, and taking great care in perusing and re-perusing them, in order that everything that was not fit to meet the public eye should be omitted.

But in April, 1626, our Blessed Mother was obliged to go to Lorraine, to establish a foundation, of which Madame de Ginoncour was the foundress. This lady ardently desired that our Blessed Mother should herself commence this new school of virtues, and even the Prince and Princess of Lorraine wrote to the same effect, stating that they earnestly wished that their dominions should possess, though even for a little while, so great a servant of God. She left on April 27th, with some sisters, for this foundation, and passed through Besançon, where our good Sister Madeleine Adlaine, urged by a divine inspiration, had commenced one of our establishments, in spite of numerous obstacles which stood in the way. Eighty aspirants for the habit of S. Mary presented themselves to our good Mother at Besançon, without knowing how they could possibly gain their end; however, they had met to show our Blessed Mother how desirous they were of becoming her daughters, to receive her blessing, and to recommend themselves to her prayers. Our Blessed Mother smiled on seeing herself besieged by this little army; she exhorted them to enter the service of God, to be devout to our Lady, and gave them great hopes that our Lord would one day grant their prayers. After this she placed them round the room, to speak to each of them a kind word separately; and penetrating by di-

vine light the depths of their hearts, one after another, she selected thirty-six, to whom she said that they would be received on the establishment of the institute at Besançon. Not one of those whom our Blessed Mother had thus selected failed in making their holy profession in this convent, when it was established on the Festival of Louis, 1630.

As soon as the chapter at Besançon were informed of the arrival of the Mother de Chantal, they assembled, and resolved to exhibit the holy Winding-Sheet in her honour; a favour that our Blessed Mother received with much humility and joy. She kissed and venerated this holy relic, burying her heart in that sacred shroud where the precious Body of our Lord had been laid with such love and devotion by Joseph and Nicodemus. People indeed were astonished that the canons should have, of their own accord, exhibited the holy Winding-Sheet, since it is a favour only granted to princes and princesses. But God, who favours the desires of the humble, seeing that His faithful servant had not dared to demand a favour which she so ardently desired, inspired them with the thought of doing this act of charity. Thus the Divine Lover did not wish to conceal the Winding-Sheet of His Body from His well-beloved, to whom He so often discovered the secrets of His Heart. The business of the institute obliged her to remain three days at Besançon. All the lords and ladies, who were there in great numbers, offered her their residences, which she humbly re-

fused, preferring to live in simplicity with her religious, than to be magnificently treated.

The Prince and Princess de Cantecroix begged her at least to hear mass in their chapel; which she did to satisfy their piety. They had prepared some carpet stools for her to kneel on, but she would not use them, saying to Madame de Cantecroix, "Do not oblige me to use this stool, I shall not be at ease; a religious has always her stool at hand, namely, the earth, which was the stool used by our Lord when He prayed in the garden of Olives, and when He spent the night in prayer on the mountain." This religious act edified the princess, who did not know what to reply, and our Blessed Mother knelt down in front of her eight religious, for she had brought with her a companion in addition to the six sisters belonging to the foundation, and a sister, for a directress in one of our houses. They all took their places according to their rank. They performed the ceremonies of the mass as if they had been in a chapel belonging to one of our convents, which was a subject of much delight to the Prince de Cantecroix; these nine religious seemed to him to typify the nine choirs of angels in his chapel; Mother de Chantal was as a true seraph, with a heavenly fire issuing from her countenance. After the termination of mass and thanksgiving, Monseigneur and Madame de Cantecroix begged our Blessed Mother to enter their hotel to inspect their curiosities; but she begged to be excused, alleging that she would not see anything in their château which could equal what she had seen in their chapel.

They sent for their son to receive the blessing of this Blessed Mother, who, after many objections, gave it, lest it should appear more selfish than humble. The Prince and Princess then conducted her to her retreat, and sent her a magnificent dinner by their servants.

During her three days' stay at Besançon, this virtuous woman spent every afternoon with her. As long as the day lasted, the two rooms were continually filled with people, who came to converse with our holy Mother; as they entered, they were made to sit down, in order that all might see the saint. She was obliged continually to refuse her benediction to those who asked for it, and said to our sisters, "Let us, for the love of God, leave this place, for these people do not know who I am."

On her leaving Besançon, she went to Salins, and visited Madame de Château Rouleau, who afterwards died in the odour of sanctity. These two servants of Jesus Christ spoke to one another with great openness of heart and much holy suavity; before separating, each desired to receive the blessing of her whom she deemed to be her superior in virtue; and lastly, they blessed one another in the name of Jesus Christ. When she went to Pont-à-Mousson, where she was to make a foundation, Madame de Ginoncour, benefactress of the house which she was about to establish, wished her to take up her abode with her. This lady had an action of great importance against her brother; our Blessed Mother, on entering the house, invoked the aid of Him who, in days

of yore, commanded His apostles to proclaim peace where they went, and was inspired to inquire whether they were at peace with their neighbours; they told her everything, saying, that as God had brought her there, it must be for some good purpose, so that the whole dispute was laid before her, and she so adjudicated on the case, that they ever afterwards lived in perfect union. This foundation was established with many temporal advantages; for it was protected by their serene highnesses the Prince and Princess of Lorraine, who often visited our holy Mother, and afterwards wrote to her sometimes with kindness and respect. His serene highness, the Prince of Lorraine, often told our sisters that he had a good right to call them his sisters, since he loved and respected Madame de Chantal as his own mother. He used to say, "She is the saint of our century."

CHAPTER XVIII.

OUR BLESSED MOTHER RESIGNS THE OFFICE OF SUPERIORESS, AND IS COMPELLED TO UNDERTAKE SEVERAL JOURNEYS.

THE period of our holy Mother's deposition having arrived during her stay at Pont-à-Mousson, she lost no time in writing to the Bishop of Geneva, and sent him her resignation. Whereon this good prelate wrote to her, stating that the community were much mortified; but that

as it was necessary that they should yield to the humility of their good Mother, they had accordingly elected in her place our very honoured sister, Peronne-Marie de Châtel, whom our Blessed Mother had sent for from Aix, as assistant in her absence. She was herself much delighted at being deposed, and made her companion take the upper place, in obedience to the rule, which ordered those superioresses who were dismissed to take the last place.

Our dear Sister Anne Catherine de Beaumont, at that time superioress of the house in Paris, (the one in the Rue S. Antoine,) hearing that our Blessed Mother was in Lorraine, did all in her power to get her to go to Paris. The Archbishop of Bourges, her daughter-in-law, Madame de Chantal, and several others, urged her to go, but her reply was, that she saw no necessity for it, and as for use, she was so insignificant a creature, that she was perfectly useless everywhere. She spent about four months in Lorraine, placed the house in good order, received several novices, members of the first families, left our dear Sister Paule Jeronime Favrot as superioress, and returned to Annecy. She was wont to say, that she never felt a greater desire to leave any place than she did Pont-à-Mousson, on account of the great praise which she there received, and the number who followed to see and consult her.

There came, amongst others, one of great perfection and interior life, who had not met with any one who could understand her, or who could give her peace of mind. Attracted by the reputation of

our Blessed Mother, she came to see her, and having spoken to her several times on different occasions for hours at a time, she was so fully satisfied, that she said, that till then she was in ignorance and darkness, but that our Blessed Mother had discovered to her the true interior paths of perfection, and that God had kept the promise that He had made her, when once praying with much ardour of spirit to show her some one that would assure her of the truth of His graces; He replied, "Be content; I shall send thee a faithful servant, to whom I have given light and the gift of guiding My spouses; she will enlighten you." This good soul lost no opportunity in saying, that as S. Paul had said, that our Lord Jesus Christ had come into the world for him alone, so also in like manner she might say that God had sent this worthy mother for her sake alone into Lorraine.

The saint went through Franche Comté, and returned by the Duchy of Burgundy, visited several of our houses, and spent a few days with her daughter Madame de Toulonjon, where her daughter-in-law Madame de Chantal had come expressly to see her. She showed in this journey how completely she had obtained the mastery over her own inclinations. It was wished that she should visit Monthélon, the property of her son Baron de Chantal, while on her way from Autun, the residence of her daughter Madame de Toulonjon; she refused, on the plea that it would cause her no little distraction, and thus leaving her daughter-in-law's carriage, she en-

tered another, and went on her way, though she felt no little grief at leaving one who had come expressly from Paris to see her.

Our Blessed Mother was about this time consoled in a most miraculous manner, and as it is likely to give much edification, I have no difficulty in relating it. She had but one brother, the Archbishop of Bourges, whom she loved dearly. Though he was an excellent prelate, and lived in the fear of God, still he was in the world and at the court, which caused great anguish of spirit to our Blessed Mother; and she often prayed God to change the heart of this dear brother, so that he might no longer serve two masters. During the summer of 1626, our Lord cast this great prelate on his bed, in order to exalt him in His love. He warned him, like another Ezechias, to set his house in order, as he had only two more days to live. As soon as he had heard this opinion of the physicians, he reflected, in the bitterness of his soul, on all that he had done in the sight of God during the past years of his life, and the Divine Goodness performed two miracles in his behalf, which we shall now relate, quoting the very words of his letter to our Blessed Mother after his recovery: "You, my very dear sister, are the first to whom I have written since my recovery, since, after God and our Blessed Lady, I owe my health and life to you, and consequently I must relate all that has occurred to me. My illness was so severe, and had reduced me to so low a state, that the Sacrament of Extreme Unction had been adminis-

tered to me; I had such a lethargy for twenty-four hours, that it was supposed that life was extinct; I had a little feeling while some violent remedies were being administered to me, and I immediately heard my friends and physicians exclaim, that without a miracle I should not hail the dawn of the sun twice. I replied not, but settled myself in bed, and commenced an examination of my conscience; it then occurred to me that our Lord had had compassion on me because I was your brother, my dear sister, and that He said, while administering to me my chastisements, that unless I was very careful, I should fall into the hands of His justice; at which I was so alarmed, that I believed myself to be lost; and extremely displeased at my past life, I besought God with all my heart to prolong my days, promising to employ those He should give me in His sacred service. At that moment I made four vows, not simple vows, but as solemn and binding as those made by a religious; the first, that I should again take the vow of chastity; secondly, that I should go to our Lady of Loreto, a journey that I had omitted after having been cured before, but I specified distinctly that I should go myself, and not attempt to gain a dispensation; thirdly, that after Loreto I should gain the indulgences in Rome by visiting the holy places; and lastly, that I should say mass daily, unless incapacitated by illness or necessity. On the completion of my vows I remained three hours without moving, keeping myself near to our Lord, and swearing that I would review and change my manner

of living. During this time, without my perceiving it, I had a violent perspiration, and I, whom all around were preparing for interment, was found to be without fever. Judge then, my beloved sister, how obliged I must feel towards you and the Divine Majesty, for the loving manner in which I have been treated." These are the words of the good Archbishop, who accomplished his vows in so exact a manner, that even in the day he was attacked with his last illness, he wished again to offer up the Holy Sacrifice, and he was taken ill at the altar, as we shall presently say; only remarking here that our Lord added, like to Ezechias, fifteen years to his life, which he employed in the service of the Divine Majesty, with a purity of conscience and in works of charity altogether remarkable.

The change in this prelate made our Blessed Mother very grateful, and she caused prayers and communions as thanksgiving to be offered in all our convents, and she annually made three communions for this purpose, to return thanks to the Blessed and Adorable Trinity for the graces which her beloved brother had received. The Archbishop of Bourges did not delay performing his pilgrimage to our Lady of Loreto, and on his return passed through the town of Annecy, where he gave great alms. He also went through a general review of his conscience, conferring with his beloved sister for some hours on the subject, dismissed some of his superfluous servants, and received from her certain exercises, written by herself for his devotional purposes. They wrote

oftener to one another, and the Archbishop of Bourges called this worthy Mother the directress of his soul.

CHAPTER XIX.

OUR BLESSED MOTHER PURSUES HER INQUIRIES RESPECTING THE LIFE OF OUR BLESSED FATHER; HER WONDERFUL FIRMNESS AT HER SON'S DEATH.

On our Blessed Mother's return to the convent where Mother de Châtel had been elected superioress, she knelt for her benediction, not even forgetting to make her companion enter the first. Mother de Châtel, however, gently constrained our saint to give her blessing to the community. She took her place in the choir as the last among the deposed superioresses; but it is true that she did not remain there long, for the bishop of Geneva, the brother and successor of our Blessed Father, commanded her, at the request of Mother de Châtel, to take a higher and a better place in the choir, as well as in the refectory.

Our Blessed Mother was informed that the Rev. Father Juste de Guérin was employed with M. Ramus, sub-delegate for the holy Apostolic See, in collecting all the particulars respecting the life and miracles of our Blessed Father; she herself made a beautiful deposition. It was then that our people began to question her about our rules, constitutions, and the Coutumier. She thus finished the

year 1626, having succeeded in obtaining other apostolical commissioners in addition to M. Ramus, as the Archbishop of Bourges and the Bishop of Belley were nominated by His Holiness.

She urged her beloved brother, the Archbishop of Bourges, to lose no time in working for the glory of our Blessed Father. Her brother wrote to her as follows: "I am delighted, beyond the power of language to express my feeling, at the commission which His Holiness has deigned to give me, to enquire into the life of our great and holy prelate; doubtless, Heaven will aid me in making this research. God has given me no common taste of His holy love, and such disgust for the world, that whether I possess or do not possess its wealth, is to me a matter of perfect indifference. If God again desired to afflict me with a malady similar to that from which I have just recovered, with equal light as regards my salvation, I would willingly accept it. I reveal my thoughts to you, as to the holy directress of my soul, and am exceeding glad at being counselled by yourself. Know, then, my dear sister, that I do not wish that we should cost your community anything, and when we go into the country I will allow six or seven crowns *per diem* for the expense of those who will be engaged in our lovely and delightful task. Oh! how rejoiced shall I be to hear daily of the graces and virtues of the saint whom Heaven gave us, the light of our days and the model of our life."

We quote at length the words of this good prelate, to show how deeply indebted we are to His

Grace, for we should never have been able, without his aid, to have borne the expenses. This noble Archbishop and Mgr. Camus, bishop of Belley, arrived here in the spring of 1627, and commenced receiving the depositions in accordance with the requisite formalities. They often took the depositions in our parlour, in the presence of our Blessed Mother, who, in days of yore, had watered the shrine of our Holy Father with tears of affliction, and now covered them with flowers of great sweetness and continual thanksgiving to our Lord, whom she saw so admirable in His saints; if she had sown in tears, she had reaped in joy, and with joyfulness carried her sheaf in her arms; in other words, she always had at her dispositions some few memorials of the virtues of our holy founder, which she was able to read at her leisure.

The whole summer was spent in this sweet occupation, but while this chaste bee was only thinking of feeding her soul with the honey of the thousand consolations which she gathered from the flowers of the virtues of our Blessed Father, it pleased our Lord to make her drink to the dregs a bitter draught. She had one son, whom she ever loved tenderly, and who loved her with an equal affection, as only a son well brought up knows how to love. He was loved by all who knew him for his amiability of character; and, indeed, it was proverbial, that to know him was to love him. He prejudiced all who saw him in his favour, and was only disliked by those who envied his immense wealth. He was never en-

gaged in any duel for his own quarrels, although he was often unfortunately induced, by the prayers of his false friends, to lose his moral courage, and act as second. He had married a wealthy woman, and one who was so amiable, that he thus wrote to our Blessed Mother: "I admire the manner in which God has guided us; had you remained in the world as we desired, had you taken that care in forwarding our interests, which your maternal love and unequalled prudence would have done, you could not have settled me better or more in accordance with your wishes; God having vouchsafed me in my marriage all the advantages eligible to those in my condition, age, and temper." This young nobleman was well thought of at court, and had begun to take pleasure in the world, when one of his most intimate friends was executed, and this was the means of withdrawing him from terrestrial affections; he could never lose sight of his friend's melancholy fate, and the end of all worldly honours, which, though attained after much fatigue, end, sometimes, in temporal punishment and eternal torment.

A few months after the death of this unhappy nobleman, the Baron de Chantal felt himself one night lifted up two or three times by his shoulders, as if some one desired to make him lie down at the bottom of the bed; he distinctly recognized the voice of his deceased friend, who twice said to him, "Prepare, Chantal, you must come:" it is true that he loved his friend so dearly that his remembrance of him was ever

fresh, but he had no wish to follow him to the tomb; wherefore he replied, "No, no, I will not go yet." Then his friend struck so hard a blow near the bed, that the Baron de Chantal's *valet-de-chambre*, who was sleeping near him, was awakened, and having brought a candle, his master passed the remainder of the night in reading a good book, for the purpose of diverting, as well as calming, the emotion of his mind. Our Lord, who desired to prepare the Baron de Chantal for a happy death, permitted that this visit from his deceased friend should inspire him with frequent thoughts of death. The court was not as pleasing to him now as heretofore; and meeting with an occasion for serving the Church and his king in the Isle of Rhé against the English, he left the pleasures of the Louvre to the other courtiers, and went to gain heaven. One day when they were about to enter into action, the Baron de Chantal went to confession, and communicated before going into battle. The action was a bloody one, and he behaved with such valour that his horse fell three times under him. God permitted that he should be mortally wounded; whereon joining his hands, he besought the mercy of God, and thus died a glorious death.

The Bishop of Geneva hearing this piece of melancholy intelligence, resolved that none but himself should present the bitter chalice to the Blessed Mother of this worthy son. He could not entrust the commission to the Archbishop of Bourges, who was then, as we have already said, in this town, as His Grace was too deeply affected him-

self to be able to console another. After the Holy Sacrifice, when she had communicated, his Lordship sent for her into the parlour, and ordered the sister porter to desire Madame de Châtel to be ready to succour our good Mother, should she be taken ill. The parlour was filled with their Lordships the Commissioners, several ecclesiastics, and some fathers of religious orders. "News have been received," remarked the Bishop of Geneva, "from the seat of war; a severe conflict has taken place in the Isle of Rhé; the Baron de Chantal before going there heard mass, confessed, and communicated; and lastly,——" "My Lord," interrupted our Blessed Mother, "he is dead." The good prelate burst into tears, and was unable to speak a word, and there was not a dry eye in the parlour. Thus recognizing her loss, she alone was tranquil amid so many sobs and lamentations; and kneeling down, with clasped hands, her eyes lifted up to heaven, and her heart pierced with sorrow, she gave free vent to her tears, and to acts of her loving submission to the Divine Will.

The following words we quote from a written narrative by the hand of Madame de Châtel, who was beside her: "Allow me, my Lord and my God, allow me to speak, to give vent to my grief; and what shall I say, O my God, unless it be to thank Thee for the honour Thou hast done in taking my only son while he was fighting for the Church of Rome." She then took up a crucifix, which she kissed, with both her hands: "I receive this blow, my Redeemer,

with all submission, and beseech you to receive this child into the arms of Thy Divine mercy." After this she thus addressed her dear deceased child, and said: "O my dear son! how happy art thou in having sealed with thy blood the fidelity which thy ancestors have ever had for the Church of Rome; in this I esteem myself happy, and return thanks to God for having been thy mother." On this she turned round to Madame de Châtel, and both repeated a *De Profundis*. Those who were present perceiving that she had no need of any other supporter than that of her virtue, did not say a word to her; their sorrow and admiration deprived them of speech. She arose, and with her eyes filled with tears, said to the Bishop of Geneva: "I assure you, my Lord, that for more than eighteen months I felt myself interiorly urged to ask God to grant to me the grace that my son should die in His service, and not in those unhappy duels in which his friends occasionally precipitated him."

As she was thus speaking, the Archbishop of Bourges, uncle to the deceased, approached to her, weeping so bitterly, that all were deeply affected on hearing him. Our Blessed Mother consoled him; and he said to her: "O my dear sister, your resignation terrifies me; it is worthy of your virtue alone; as for me, I shall never attain to so high a degree of virtue." He then related one after another the perfections and merits of her son, assuaging her grief in increasing it, by mentioning those little recollections which are so dear to us after the loss of any one

whom we love dearly. While the good Archbishop was speaking, our Blessed Mother interrupted him from time to time with a few words of devotion; then leaving the parlour, she went into the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, where she was so long engaged in prayer, that the superioress was obliged to command her to take some food, which she did, arising from her knees quite tranquil and calm. She returned to her religious duties as if nothing had happened; and never did any affliction or consolation prevent her from accomplishing her duty, though in every trial she retired for a few days into herself, feeling deeply the loss of those whom she loved.

A few days after the reception of this melancholy intelligence, our Blessed Mother wrote thus to our sisters: "I thank you, my dear daughters, for the prayers that you have offered up for my beloved son. It is true that I felt this death deeply; not, however, as a death, but as life to the soul of this dear child: God hath given me very clear light as to His mercy towards his soul. Alas! the very idea of thinking that he might have died in the disgrace of God while engaged in those duels, would have affected me more deeply than this real death of his, which was good and christian. I confess that this death has affected me deeply; but the consolation that I feel in my son having shed his blood for the faith, has surpassed my grief; and besides, my dear daughters, it is so long since I left this son and everything else to our Lord, that His goodness has vouchsafed me the grace of having no other desire than that He

should dispose for me according to his own good pleasure everything for time and eternity." What especially affected our Blessed Mother, was the extreme grief of His Grace the Archbishop of Bourges, who loved the deceased, not as his nephew, but as his own son. He could not command his feelings, so that he became perfectly useless in prosecuting the enquiries respecting the life and miracles of our Blessed Father. The least delay caused much pain to our Blessed Mother; who, perceiving that her words did not make so deep an impression on him as she desired, had recourse to our Lord, and begged our very honoured Mother de Châtel to make three communions with her, to obtain from the Holy and Adorable Trinity that perfect consolation and conformity requisite for this good prelate.

At the third of these communions made for this intention, these two mothers being on their knees close to one another, in their choir, and offering up their thanksgiving, our Blessed Mother turned to our Mother de Châtel, and said to her, "Let us, my dear mother, say a *Laudate Dominum*, for God has heard us;" which they did, and afterwards Mother de Châtel bid her say how she knew it; looking on her as her superioress, she thus related it: "At the commencement of mass I asked of God an entire conformity of the will of the Archbishop of Bourges to His very holy will; my soul was powerfully drawn into this Divine Will, which I saw to be God Himself, and I was asked interiorly if I was prepared to suffer for my brother. I replied, that I was ready to do the Divine

Will. I then recognized that the Archbishop of Bourges had loved my son too deeply, and too much in the spirit of the world, and that as a punishment for this mere natural love and his worldly qualities, God permitted this great weariness which the loss caused him, and that the motives of resignation which were given him, and which he himself saw, did not afford him any succour. I immediately abandoned myself to the Divine Will, protesting to our Lord, that if such was His holy will and His good pleasure, I would willingly deprive myself of the peace of mind which His Divine Goodness had given me, for my good brother, who was offering up the holy sacrifice. I remained in this state until after the holy communion, when it was said to me, 'I take it from you, and give it to him.' On this I felt the little resignation I had felt, leave me, so far as its sensible presence was concerned, while there entered into my soul all those weak tendernesses and recollections which I had perceived in the Archbishop of Bourges. This made me suffer considerably for some time, feeling in my soul a perpetual distraction about my son, and great grief; but, however, I was much consoled, when after mass, going to see the Archbishop of Bourges, he cried out to me from the sacristy: 'At last I have placed my will in that of God, and at the end of mass I was cured of the extreme restlessness which I felt for the loss of our dear deceased;' adding several words of resignation, for which I blessed God with my heart filled with gratitude towards this Divine Goodness. From

that morning the Archbishop of Bourges commenced working as assiduously as ever in the *procès-Verbal.*"

This was the declaration which our Mother made, and although by an uncommon charity she had taken on herself the grief and sorrow felt by her brother, nevertheless she spoke no more of her beloved deceased child whom she had lost. But if she said anything else, it was to express her great joy in his dying as a christian knight, though she said this in a few words and with entire resignation. About three months after the decease of the Baron de Chantal, a good soul saw him in a state of grace, but in great suffering in Purgatory, as in a deep well; the same person saw our Blessed Mother above the well with a large cross in her hand, one end of which she held to her dear suffering son, and thus gradually raised him from this abyss of suffering. The succour which our saint gave to her son with the cross, was interpreted to be her own troubles, the merits of which she applied to him by the virtue of the cross and blood of Jesus Christ. The person who had this vision vouchsafed to her, was so horrified at seeing through what sufferings this soul was cleansed in purgatory from the effects of the vain pleasures which it had enjoyed in the world, that she was covered all over with a cold sweat, and fainted away, and it was long before she came to herself again. This vision was of great use to her soul.

CHAPTER XX.

SEVERAL VOYAGES UNDERTAKEN BY OUR BLESSED MOTHER; THE VENERATION WHICH SHE EVERYWHERE INSPIRES, AND HER MIRACLES.

On the festival of the Ascension, 1627, our dear sisters of Orleans having an election to make, and knowing that our Blessed Mother was deposed, elected her as superioress. She could not accept a triennium out of the first house of the Institute, for our Blessed Father had stated that he wished her to have an especial care of all the houses, and not one in particular; nevertheless, she deemed it her duty to go to Orleans to prepare for the new election. But it was postponed till September, which was the time appointed for the commissioners to finish what they had to do in this country. As she was preparing for this journey, the principal inhabitants of Crémieux, desiring to have a foundation in their town, besought our Mother to bring some of her sisters, as she would pass through Crémieux on her way to Orleans. On the day that our Blessed Mother left Annecy, M. de Granieux, of Grenoble, having suffered for several years from violent head-aches, visited the shrine of our Blessed Father to ask for his health. He arrived as our Blessed Mother left the convent. This pious young man threw himself at her feet, when, perceiving that it was

the son of Madame de Granieux, one of her dearest and most faithful spiritual friends, she wished him good morning, and then laid her hand on his head, and he arose up immediately cured. Having gone into our parlour, he related how his head-ache had passed away when Mother de Chantal laid her hand on his head. "I came," said he, "to ask my health of the Saint, and, lo! his daughter has given it me."

A remarkable instance of the efficacy of the prayers of our Blessed Mother occurred on the first evening she spent at Crémieux; Madame de S. Julien and Madame de Mépieu, who had given the foundation, resided in the same house with all their suite, in order to leave one of their houses entirely at the disposal of our Blessed Mother and her daughters. Now it happened that one of the grooms, having drunk more than he ought, fell asleep with a lighted candle in his hand, and set fire to the straw all around him; having been suddenly startled from his sleep, as he found himself surrounded by fire, he jumped out of the window, and made his escape without raising the alarm. The horses that were in the stable, attracted the notice of the inmates by their loud neighing; the good and devout Madame de Mépieu, seeing her house on fire, and anticipating its entire destruction, ran to our worthy Mother, beseeching her to make on her behalf any vow that she thought well, and it should be accomplished. It has been acknowledged by all present, and ever after regarded as a miracle, that as soon as our Blessed Mother knelt down the fire was extinguished, as if

a deluge of water had fallen on it; the planks that had begun to give way, remained as they were, warped by the fire in the form of an arch, and the straw was found to be half burnt; a sovereign power having arrested this fire, which was so great, that it is sufficient for us to say that several carriage-horses were found completely roasted to death under the rack. All present exclaimed, "A miracle! a miracle!" But the humble servant of God did not fail to assert that it had occurred through the powerful intercession of our holy founder, at whose shrine she made the vow that Madame de Mepieu should offer the silver model of a house, which she did; but no matter her assertion to the contrary, the miracle was universally attributed to her prayers, and ever since the town of Crémieux has paid her an especial devotion.

She founded this house to the great edification and consolation of the people, and left there as superioress, our dear Sister Marie Adrienne Fichet, and, continuing her journey, arrived at Orleans, where words would fail us to speak adequately of the holy joy with which she was received, and the consolation she felt in our Lord's vouchsafing to work several miracles through the intercession and application of the relics of our Blessed Father.

Our holy Mother spent three months at Orleans, and though she refused the triennial government of the house, she condescended, as she had been elected, to perform all the functions of a superioress with an exactitude, meekness, and

humility, which edified all that came in contact with her. After the accomplishment of these three months she informed the chapter that she could not possibly remain longer with them, that her superiors had deemed it but right that she should visit and aid them at the commencement, to show thereby an example that nothing should prevent superiors going to the house which had elected them ; but that as it was no longer in her power to be of any further service to them, she urged them to proceed to a fresh election, which was done by these beloved sisters, with no less mortification than filial submission to our beloved Mother, who was exceedingly pleased with this community. Then, in obedience to the Bishop of Geneva, she went to Paris, where she spent some little time, as well in the convent in the city, as in that in the faubourg S. Jacques. While there, believing that our house at Turin would be soon established, and that our dear Sister Anne Catherine Beaumont, then ex-superioress of the convent in the faubourg S. Jacques, would be better in Piedmont than at Paris, she obtained permission from the Bishop of Geneva to call her there, while he sent in her place our very honoured Mother Marie Jacqueline Faber, who had left Dijon, and was at that time superioress of our house at Bourg en Bresse, which she had founded.

The spring and summer of this year (1618) were spent by our Blessed Mother in visiting several of our houses. She was prevented going to some of them by the plague, but she found means of corresponding with them, animating them to re-

ciprocal charity, and urging them to submit with love to the scourge which our Lord had sent them. She spent four or five days with her daughter, Madame de Toulonjon, at Allonne, and being unable, on account of the plague, to visit our Sisters at Autun, she wrote to them ; our dear Sister Marie Hélène de Chateluz, at that time superioress of this house, knowing that our Blessed Mother was only half a league distant from them, obtained permission to see her in the middle of a field, that there, speaking at a distance, she might talk of her house, to one who, as their common mother, had a right to know the state of everything. When our saint saw this good superioress at a distance from her, she invoked the assistance of our Lord, remained a little while in prayer, and making the sign of the cross, said, "Let us meet in the name of God ; He will be with us, and defend us from all harm." This said, she went up to our dear Sister, who dared not advance towards her, embraced her affectionately, made her get into the carriage, and sit by her side. Madame de Toulonjon, who had accompanied her mother, said not a word, although she was exceedingly restless on account of her daughter, her only child, who was then only six years old. She said to our Blessed Mother's companion, "Were I not indeed certain that my dear mother is a saint, I should die from fright."

They slept at the Baron de Roussillon's, who had married the daughter of the Comte de Chateluz, own sister to our dear superioress at Autun. This pious lady, kneeling down before our Blessed

Mother, said, "Madame, were I not assured of your sanctity, I should be so frightened as to give up my house to my sister; but I am confident that no misfortune will happen to any of us; only give me your benediction." Our dear Mother blessed the house, and emboldened by this, the Baroness de Roussillon slept the following night with her sister, the good Mother de Chateluz, whom our Blessed Mother left the following day, having assured her that our Lord would preserve her house from all contagion, which happened, although every house in the vicinity of the convent was entirely deserted, owing to the infection and mortality of the plague.

Our Blessed Mother went from hence to Dijon, where she spent, with her own children, as well as the Institute, three weeks. The Archbishop of Bourges also went there expressly to see and consult his sister, from which he received great benefit. This sojourn of our Blessed Mother was indeed blessed, and as one said, who had seen her, she could have exclaimed, like Jacob of old, on his return from Mesopotamia: "The Lord hath blessed me with two flocks;" for she had on one side her daughter and grand-daughter, and on the other, about forty religious, six of whom were destined for our foundation at Besançon, all of whom enjoyed a great reputation for virtue and religious perfection. From Dijon she went to Chalôns, where she spent a few days with her nephew the bishop, for this good prelate would not allow her to leave, unless she passed four or five days with him, during which time his

Lordship consulted her, not only as regarded himself, but also on business connected with his diocese.

The Carmelites and the ladies of Lencharre, reformed religious of S. Benedict, requested our Blessed Mother to spend a few days with them, which she did, with the permission of the bishop. The Ursulines of Châlons also had her to dine with them in their refectory, and to witness the fashion of some of their exercises, in order to give them some advice, which she did with as much humility as frankness. These good religious cut off a portion of her veil; on observing which she wept bitterly in the evening, and the following morning she wrote to the Bishop of Châlons, beseeching him to allow her to leave, adding, as a reason, that they esteemed her so much, that she could no longer bear it; "My good aunt," was his Lordship's reply, "the reasons that you give for imagining that they are behaving ill, induces me to praise instead of censuring them." She saw those who were anxious to see her in one of the rooms of the episcopal palace, but kept as near as possible to the wall, lest they should cut off some portion of her dress, and still she could not prevent their cutting her dress, as well as her veil. On leaving Châlons, Madame la Comtesse de Trevier begged her to spend a night at her château, which she did. This good lady spoke to her with great frankness, and wrote all that she said in her memorandum book, saying, that she used it during her trials, in order that she might profit thereby. Our

saint here sat up very late for the purpose of reconciling two persons, who intended to fight a duel on the morrow; after this she spent a few days with our Sisters at Bourg, and then returned to Crémieux, where Madame la Comtesse de Disimieux came to see her, and was cured of the dropsy. Having left our dear sisters much encouraged in the walk of perfection, she went on her way.

CHAPTER XXI.

OUR HOLY MOTHER RETURNS TO ANNECY, AND REMAINS THERE DURING THE TIME OF THE PLAGUE, WORKING FOR OUR INSTITUTE.

On the Vigil of All Saints (1628) our Blessed Mother re-entered this convent on her return from Orleans and Paris, and arrived in time to draw the *Beatitudes*. *The pure and clean of heart* fell to her share, which made her enter deeply into herself, and she then said to our very dear Mother Peronne Marie Péronne, that our Lord signified thereby that she must make a brief review of her conscience, to purify it from any stain that she might have contracted during her voyage and the hurry of business. Our Blessed Mother had not been half-an-hour in the house, before the Princess of Carignan arrived, for she was in this town; they remained closetted up for two hours, during which

period this good lady discovered her conscience to her; indeed, she often came to the convent for the same purpose. The Advent following, our Blessed Mother made an extraordinary review of her conscience, and renewed, in the hand of our beloved M. de Châtel, all her vows, both public and private, begging her to request the community to pray for her, that she might live and die in observance of the rule.

In the commencement of the following year, 1629, our sisters of Grenoble were very desirous that she should visit them. She was quite ready to leave for their city, though suffering from a severe cold, when she was prevented by the Bishop of Geneva, and our dear Mother de Châtel, who would not permit her to leave for the country, and sent in her stead our dear Sister Anne Catherine de Beaumont, who was at that time in this house.

The period of the government of Mother de Châtel having elapsed, the chapter elected, according to rule, our holy Mother as superioress, who desired to have yet a few more years of repose and quiet; however, as she had completely resigned her own will, she yielded, and accepted the office. It was the will of God that this convent should enjoy more tranquilly than ever the fruits of the good conduct of its excellent foundress. The plague, which had appeared slightly in the town ever since March, now burst forth in all its fury; all that man could do was done to persuade our Blessed Mother to leave the infected air of Annecy, and go into another house; but in vain. The Prince and Princess de Carignan wrote to

her on this subject, pleading the smallness of our convent, and yet the large number of our community, which would be exceedingly dangerous to all, should the plague break out among us. They therefore urged her to retire, and that no matter where she went, they would pay her expenses ; and that if she would not leave this house at their request, they would obtain a letter from His Royal Highness, expressly commanding her to do so. This anxiety on the part of this noble prince and his virtuous princess, was a subject of great displeasure to our Blessed Mother ; her humility suffered much when she saw the care paid to her who sought to conceal herself from all notice. She, however, replied with such submission, generosity, and prudence, that she was permitted to remain at Annecy ; at which she was much consoled, saying that if she had deserted the convent, she would have been deserted by the Divine Will, as God had commanded her by her election to remain with the community. Thus she stayed with us during this period of general calamity, where, being but little required in the parlour, she employed her whole leisure in the service of the institute, and endeavoured by her words, all full of fire and fervour, to establish among us a perfect observance. She took up, for the last time, her replies, examining a number of questions which had been asked of her respecting our houses.

Words would fail were I to attempt to describe the means she adopted to protect us from the plague, which was raging all around, but, indeed, we believe that our best preservative was her per-

fect confidence in God. She dedicated three separate cells to S. Anne, S. Sebastian, and S. Roch, carrying their image processionally into each room, and ordering the same to be done annually, on their festivals. She set apart these cells for those who should be taken with the plague, if it pleased God to afflict the convent. Several sisters retired there at different periods for fevers, colds, and other illnesses, at which our Blessed Mother was not at all alarmed, providing for everything with great peace and calm. The bishop of Geneva (of happy memory) publicly stated that the perfect generosity which he had admired in this holy woman, in not abandoning her little flock, but waiting with resignation for any plague which it might please God to send her, had induced him to expose his life in aiding and succouring his people; which he did with such ardour, and with a care so truly pastoral, that our Blessed Mother said, that if our holy Founder had been alive, she knew not whether he could have done more than his pious brother and successor.

Every morning before his visit, this good prelate said his mass in our church, and conversed with our Mother; humble as he was, he took her orders as to what he was to do, and came every evening to give an account to her. This good prelate exclaimed with tears of joy, "O my good Mother! you are my Moses; I am your Joshua; for as long as your hands are lifted up to heaven, I fight against the calamity of my dear people." Our parlour was closed to all but the

bishop and his suite, and these were the very persons who exposed us most to danger, as they were continually with the plague-stricken ; but through reverence and holy charity, our Mother did not wish us to show any alarm, inasmuch as the bishop's suite came daily to the convent for the soups and medicines which our Mother continually prepared for the poor and the sick. Our Lord, who delighted in her charity, gave her means of continuing it ; our dear Sister and Mother Marie Jacqueline Faber, at that time superioress in our house in the faubourg St. Jacques, at Paris, went express for intelligence respecting the health of our Blessed Mother, together with an alms of one hundred crowns, and several preservatives against infection. Our dear Sister Hélène l'Huillier, superioress of our convent in the Rue S. Antoine, Paris, and Madame de Villeneuve, her sister, sent each of them a hundred crowns. Our very honoured Mother de Blonay also sent from the convent at Lyons, in Belle-Cour, where she had just resigned her office as superioress, some drugs and a hundred crowns for the poor. These four hundred crowns arrived most opportunely, to enable our Mother to continue her great and daily charities. As we had neglected to buy corn, our convent would have been soon perfectly destitute, yet she would not consent to desist from her daily alms ; and in order to have more to give to the poor, she proposed to the community to eat black bread, to which our sisters willingly consented, and our Blessed Mother wished to be the first to eat it. She said

that this bread, seasoned by holy charity, was the best she had ever eaten. Those who were charged with the pecuniary arrangements, assured us, that from that day during a period of several months, the corn was miraculously multiplied, as well for the community as for the poor. Our Blessed Mother spent the years 1629 and 1630 in works of true charity, as the calamity and poverty were exceeding great. She wrote to all our houses, telling them how she had behaved; "In order," said she, "that you might tell me in what we have been deficient." As a thanksgiving to God for having preserved this house from the plague, she dedicated an oratory to the sacred Mount Calvary, and another to S. Magdalene, ordering that a procession should annually be made on the festivals of the Holy Cross, in the months of May and September, to the oratory of Mount Calvary, singing the hymn and saying the prayer, *Respice quæsumus*; and that they should do the same thing on the festival of S. Magdalene, with suitable hymns, and singing in her oratory the Anthem of the first vespers of this saint, with the versicle and collect. She wrote to one of our house, that she had done this because each one should return thanks in private for particular favours bestowed on them, but that for common favours it was but right to establish some little observation in conformity with our rule, where we may give public thanks in a body.

CHAPTER XXII.

OUR BLESSED MOTHER IS PRESENT AT THE OPENING OF THE TOMB OF THE BLESSED FRANCIS DE SALES; NEW TRIALS.

At the commencement of the year 1631, our dear Sisters of Provence urged the Bishop of Geneva to allow our Blessed Mother to visit their convents, which she had never visited; this she would have done very willingly, but she was prevented in consequence of the process connected with our Blessed Father, and therefore Mother de Châtel was sent in her stead, who took with her ten of our sisters, namely, six for the foundation of our house at Montpellier, and four for different houses in Provence, which had urgently begged for some professed nuns from this first convent. Before they left, our Blessed Mother encouraged them to persevere in the simplicity of their spirit, and among other things, recommended them while visiting our houses, not to speak too highly of their community; that they should speak with humility of the good there practised, and to say that we did not seek to arrive at any other perfection than that of entire obedience; that if examined about their defects, they were not to mention any in particular, but to speak of such and such faults, for which such and such penances had been given, adding, that it was no law in the Annecy house never to fail in anything, but that it was a law to love being found fault with.

The business connected with the beatification of our Blessed Father, which had prevented Mother de Chantal going into Provence, was delayed till 1632, by the illness of the Archbishop of Bourges. As soon as he was a little convalescent, he hastened to start for Annecy, urged with the desire of working for our Blessed Father, and of a great desire to see his beloved sister. When he arrived at Annecy, he was so weak that he required the aid of two of his servants to assist him to ascend six steps; but happiness is often a medicine as salutary as it is sweet; from that evening he recovered his appetite and sleep, and was on the morrow so well, that his suite were indeed delighted, and blessed God for it.

After several depositions had been taken, the tomb of our Blessed Father was opened on the 4th of August. Words would fail us to describe the care, devotion, and order with which our Blessed Mother provided all that was requisite, or her gratitude in finding the blessed body fresh and uncorrupted. When every one had retired, that is, about nine or ten in the evening, she went with all the community to venerate the holy body, and was buried in prayer for a long time, with so inflamed a face, and yet with such gestures of extreme humility, that we could not tell what it was which drew her out of herself, whether it was love, or humility, and self-annihilation. She was so entranced, that she did not perceive the sisters who were around her, nor did she feel them touch her. She let us do what we would, without making any movement, or opening her eyes.

She showed at this moment a remarkable act of obedience. Their Lordships the commissioners had ordered that the body should not be touched, meaning thereby that nothing should be cut; nevertheless, as they were not explicit, our Mother would neither permit us, nor would she herself do so, to kiss his hand, being satisfied with venerating his habit until the morrow. She covered, in the presence of our superior, the saint's face, and requested permission to kiss his hand, which, being granted, she bent her head and placed his hand thereon, and the Saint, as if he had been alive, extended his hand over his beloved daughter's head, and pressed it as if giving her a paternal caress. She visibly felt the supernatural movement of the hand of one that was dead, which seemed yet animate with life, and we still preserve as a two-fold relic the veil which our Blessed Mother then wore. The sisters saw this holy hand move, and its fingers press the head of our Blessed Mother.

The Prince and Princess de Carignan were also present at the opening of the coffin. Nobles and ladies of high rank also came from Paris, Dijon, Grenoble, and other places; and as it seemed that our Blessed Mother was only an echo through which the saint spoke, she was overwhelmed with visitors, several desiring to open their hearts to her. She satisfied their desires with great sweetness of disposition.

The commissioners having returned to France, our Blessed Mother was ordered to transcribe all the depositions, and to prepare everything for the

journey of the Rev. Fathers Dom Juste and Dom Maurice, who were to go to Rome on the business. Our Blessed Mother begged alms from those of our houses which were the most wealthy, in order that they might contribute with temporal goods to honour him who had done so much spiritual good for them; and this was immediately accorded with filial affection and cordial frankness.

She was engaged in this, when it pleased our Lord to send her a fresh trial,—the death of M. Faber, the first confessor of the community. As soon as she heard of his illness, she prayed to God for him, and on leaving the chapel, said, "Again, another spoliation; this good man is going to his eternal repose, to his dear Master. The greatest happiness I had in this world, was to consult with this good son of our Blessed Father, remarking in him several vestiges of the spirit and solid devotion of our holy founder; but since it is God's will that he should die, I must not wish that he should live." This good M. Faber had always been excessively timid; he experienced much fear of the judgment of God at the hour of his death. Our Blessed Mother, to whom he mentioned this subject, recommended him strongly to our Lord, and wrote to him, bidding him resign himself to the Divine Will, which made such an impression on his soul, that in a short time after he bid her not to be in pain for him, as all his frightful feelings were changed into a peaceful confidence in the mercy of God. This virtuous ecclesiastic had lived many years with our Blessed Father, and had accompanied our

Blessed Mother in the most of her journeys, "Alas!" said he, "those who are on the bed of death, are in the pulpit of truth; my true feeling is, that our holy Mother is one of the greatest servants of God on earth. Twenty-three years since I admired in her a conscience purer and clearer than crystal; I also wished to write something respecting her, but I was retained by my own unworthiness, having often heard our Blessed Father say that he was not worthy to speak of this holy woman, and therefore I held my tongue." The good servant of God died on the 24th of March, 1633, and left as the executress of his will our Mother de Chantal, a duty which she discharged in a most conscientious and scrupulous manner. She acted like a mother to a nephew of the deceased, whom she brought up and educated.

In this year our Blessed Mother heard of the death of her daughter-in-law, Madame la Baronne de Chantal, who left an orphan daughter, who became afterwards the Marquise de Sévigne. She was as much affected at her death, as if she had been her own child; but her only exclamation was, "The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be His holy Name." Scarcely had the messenger who brought this melancholy intelligence left the convent, than she received another, telling her of the death of M. de Toulonjon, her son-in-law. When she heard of this death, she was in the parlour with the Prevôt de Sales, who was reading to her a portion of his MS. Life of our Blessed Father. She changed colour,

and exclaimed, "What a number of deaths!" and then, after a little reflection, clasping her hands, added, "How many pilgrims are hastening home to their eternal dwelling; receive them, O my God, into the arms of Thy mercy!" and having prayed awhile for the deceased, and shed a few tears, she requested M. de Sales to continue, though her heart was deeply affected at the loss of this nobleman, who was very accomplished, pious, and wealthy; she was also much touched at the idea of the deep affliction of her daughter, who was then at Pignerol, where the deceased was governor.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OUR BLESSED MOTHER FOUNDS A SECOND CONVENT AT ANNECY.

M. Faber, of whom we have just spoken, had often expressed a great desire to see a second convent of the Visitation of S. Mary in this town of Annecy, and had proposed it to our Blessed Mother, who always opposed it. It was necessary that the proposition should come from God, which it did in Easter, 1633. Having been sent for into the parlour, she found a number of young ladies waiting her arrival, who threw themselves on their knees, and earnestly besought her to receive them into our order, as they could no longer live in the world; and at this moment God inspired our

Blessed Mother with the idea of founding a second convent at Annecy; and this impression was so firmly fixed, that she never wavered an instant. On the morrow she communicated with this intention, and was so confirmed in the belief that it was the will of God, that she resolved to do all in her power to effect this object, and speak of it to the bishop of Geneva, and M. de Château Martin, our honoured spiritual father. Both approved of her project; it is true that they made some difficulty about the funds; but our Blessed Mother having told them of her great confidence in Divine Providence, they consented, and she rejoiced in being permitted, with their consent, to commence the undertaking. She lost no time in obtaining the approval of the Prince of Carignan through the Comte de Balbian, a very virtuous and pious nobleman. She also requested the Rev. Father Juste (our present bishop) who was going to Turin on business connected with the beatification of our Blessed Father, to communicate her plan to his royal highness, Victor Amadeus, adding, that she would regard his consent as a certain sign of the Divine Will. On the simple proposition of this establishment being made to him, this great Prince immediately gave his consent, and urged her to put it into execution. "Seeing," said our holy Mother, "that all were inclined for this good work, although I had many internal trials on the ground of human prudence, as regarded the difficulty of commencing so great an enterprise, at my advanced age, and in so impoverished a country; nevertheless, I had not the

courage to retreat, fearing that I should thereby distrust God, on an occasion so connected with His glory, and the well-being of many souls."

In the month of October, of the same year, the bishop of Geneva having obtained letters patent sent from his royal highness for the establishment, sent them to our Blessed Mother, who offered them to our Lord, beseeching Him earnestly to take this enterprise under His protection. She delayed the presentation of these letters till January, 1634, which occasioned a great noise and persecution, in the town, as well against our Blessed Mother as against this house. However, as a person of note was speaking to our Blessed Mother in an exaggerated way of the storm which had been raised against her, she replied, that the threats of man could never make her draw back one step in the work of God; and that nothing but the will of his royal highness and of superiors could induce her to retreat. However, several libels were presented against her and this house to his royal highness, so that she lost the letters patent which she had already obtained. The senate turned a deaf ear even to the reasons brought forward by the Prince de Carignan in our favour; so that the corporation of the town would not in any way yield, notwithstanding the earnest entreaties of the Duchess de Nemours, whose influence was very great. In a word, the enemy used every artifice in his power to prevent this establishment, and finding that he was going to be unsuccessful, he wished to be revenged on her who had concerted and undertaken the plan,

and accordingly attacked our Blessed Mother, representing to her that she contravened the will of God in not desisting from a plan so universally opposed; that the voice of the people is the voice of God; and that it was an act of great imprudence, on her part, in being so obstinate. The temptation was so strong, that she imagined at one time that she was answerable for all the sin committed by those who opposed the foundation, which affected her heart more than words can express. While thus tried, she went before her crucifix, weeping bitterly, and asking God to give her a clear knowledge of His will, and protesting that she was willing to cease, as she had commenced.

It did not seem good to her faithful Spouse to console her Himself, but sent her to be fortified at the tent of the shepherds. She sent for our spiritual Father, to whom, with all candour, she discovered her troubles, and from whom she received instructions which, as she has herself told us, she could never forget. So much peace and serenity did they convey to her mind, and such an assurance that she was doing the will of God, that she continued her undertaking. "The words of this pious servant of God," said our Blessed Mother, "consoled me much, and showed me clearly the impertinence of the temptation with which I had been tried, leaving me so encouraged, that had the difficulties and the storm lasted for ten years, I would not, Divine Grace assisting me, have drawn back." Though the storm seemed to wax stronger and stronger,

our Blessed Mother, assured by her superiors (in whom she trusted more than in her own feelings) that she was following the will of God, prepared the materials, and selected the spot for her buildings. The world laughed at her, but she remained perfectly tranquil, confident that God would finish His work; which happened more advantageously than could have been expected. In fact, his royal highness decided in favour of this establishment, being confident that Mother de Chantal would only request that which was right and proper; God also touched the senate and the corporation in such a manner, that those who had been the most opposed, were the first to present their daughters for this new convent.

Not only did our Lord level every difficulty, but assisted the poverty of this house, which had involved itself in many expenses for the beatification of our Blessed Father. The commander de Sillery, hearing of our Blessed Mother's enterprise, desired to found the church of this second convent; and on the foundation-stone were engraved the following words, "God knows him who founds this Church." *(Celui qui fonde cette Eglise Dieu le sait.)* Our beloved sisters of Paris contributed of their own funds for the building of the convent, so that we were indebted for everything to charity. Our Blessed Mother perceiving that her plan was so successful, received at once the eleven who were destined for this foundation, in order that they might all start from the first house at Annecy together, to commence the second. On Saturday, when our Blessed Mother, in obe-

dience to our rule, had named the superioress of the new house, she spoke to us in a most fervent address of her desire that these two houses should live in perfect unity; telling us that she would willingly shed her blood, if it was requisite, for the purpose of so firmly cementing our hearts, that they might be indivisible; and that if she could foresee that any misunderstanding would ever arise between these houses, she would give up for ever a design so long and patiently pursued. "I would immediately," said she, "make the workmen cease from their labour, give up the enterprise, and let the world point their finger at me; this humiliation would be nothing compared to the grief I should feel, were I to perceive the slightest emulation or coldness between the two convents."

On the Festival of the very Adorable and Holy Trinity, (1634) after supper, and about the same hour that our first mothers had commenced the Institute, the eleven mothers and sisters destined by the foundation, left in a procession, headed by our Blessed Mother, to dwell in this second house, near the residence of the President, M. Faber de la Valbonne; it was formerly the residence of our Blessed Father. The crowd was so great that we could scarcely pass through the streets. Our Blessed Mother remained with them a few days, leaving as superioress our very dear sister Madeleine Elizabeth de Lucinge. Though absent, yet she took upon herself with great foresight to provide everything that was requisite for our dear sisters, but she had a great wish that their

furniture and ornaments should savour of the holy poverty of our first establishment, of which she wished the new house to be a portrait; and truly it was so in fervour and purity of life, which delighted our Blessed Mother exceedingly. She went soon after, by the order of the Bishop of Geneva, to give the habit to the first novices that were professed, and was so delighted that she was wont to say, that, if it was the will of God, she would willingly suffer, every year, still worse trials and contradictions if only she could afterwards erect a house where God was so faithfully served and glorified as He was there.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONTINUATION OF THE JOURNEYS OF OUR BLESSED MOTHER; HER LAST JOURNEY TO FRANCE.

Our Blessed Mother finished her second triennium in this house, 1635, and our very honoured Mother Peronne-Marie de Châtel at Chambéry, whereon our Blessed Mother requested the Bishop of Geneva to recall her to Annecy, on the plea that her native air would be more conducive to her health. She arrived about the period of the election, and was elected superioress, and our dear Mother Marie Jacqueline Faber sent to Chambéry. It was, indeed, a delightful sight to see our Blessed Mother between the two first of her children, without, however, gratifying them by leaving the lowest place which belonged to her, as the last

who had been superior. Taking our very honoured Mother Faber by the hand, she said to her, "Let us, my daughter, go and tell our faults; it will do us, who have so long been superiors, no little good to practise the humility of inferiors."

The pleasure we felt in having our first Mothers together was interrupted by the brief illness and death of the Bishop of Geneva, brother to our Blessed Father; a loss which greatly affected our Blessed Mother, inasmuch as she regarded this good prelate as a real and true pillar of the Church, and wept for him as such, but always with her wonted resignation. This good prelate, before his decease, had promised that our Blessed Mother should go into France to settle some important business, and speak to the bishops who were holding their general assembly.

As she has said in her second epistle, printed at the commencement of the *Coutumier*, the principal object of those who desired her to go Paris, (where she arrived in July, 1635,) was to see if they could possibly unite our Institute with another order, and she humbly begged some of the bishops to communicate with the Commander de Sillery. Certain proposals were brought forward, which were discussed for some time, but it was clearly seen that these new propositions were contrary to the spirit of our congregation, and that it would engender more inconvenience than the evil which it was proposed to avoid. After this, we in all sincerity communicated to them the thoughts and intention which we had recognized in our Blessed Father, and read his own words

to them. These good prelates admired our Blessed Father's prudence. "What do we want more?" they asked, "it is the Founder who speaks, and who leaves us a bond of union, not of authority, but charity, at once sweeter and more solid." They were unanimous in agreeing that no other bond of union should be sought for, and that this declaration was to stop all propositions whatsoever.

These are the words of our Blessed Mother, who now employed her leisure time in revising the *Coutumier*, and the *Ceremonial*, adding the necessary explanations; and with the advice of the bishops she inserted several very remarkable illustrations of the intentions of our Blessed Father, which it was necessary to adopt. She also printed our office, according to the Reform of Pope Urban VIII. As soon as she had finished her business at Paris, she visited our convents in Burgundy, the Duchy of Languedoc, Dauphiné, and Provence, our spiritual father consenting thereto, (the see of Geneva being still vacant,) in which she employed the time elapsing from April to October, 1636, when she returned to this convent. She was much wearied by these visits, owing to the excessive heat felt in Provence, from which she suffered much; but every exertion seemed perfectly insignificant, provided she could be useful to God and her order. As our honoured spiritual father had exacted, on pain of obedience, that she should be absent from this convent as little as possible, approving, however, of what she should deem useful,

she was so particular, that she never stayed a single day in any house longer than was absolutely necessary. On visiting our convent at Autun, where she only slept one night, our Blessed Mother spoke to all the community, including our out sisters and the sisters of the little habit; she had no wish to call on her daughter, Madame de Toulonjon, though aware that her only son was dangerously ill. This good lady and her brother-in-law, the abbot of S. Satur, went to compel her to stop at Allonne, their ordinary residence, because it was on her road, to which she consented; and she took Madame de Toulonjon in her litter with her, to converse with her, leaving the others in the carriage. She only dined with her daughter, and left, purposing to spend the night about three or four leagues distant; after having given her blessing to her grandson, she gave his mother every reason to hope that he would not die. She begged her daughter not to accompany her, and this on the plea that her time might be more free, and render her obedience more punctual and prompt.

She often arose, at this period, at two o'clock A. M., to assist at mass, and then leave in haste; and although so old, she awoke those who were with her. It was also her custom to enliven those who accompanied her by her great gaiety, without abating anything of their spiritual exercises. It was remarkable, that by an admirable dispensation of Divine Providence, God adapted the season to the constitution of the superioress while travelling through Provence; for as she had voluntarily

exposed herself to this undertaking through love, love preserved her from the scorching rays of the sun by day, and the cold dampness of the moon by night. It seemed that God had provided a refreshing weather against the extreme heat of Provence for this true Israelite; and our dear sisters have written to us, stating that the oldest inhabitants of Provence had never witnessed so beautiful a summer, for, though not generally the case, there were gentle showers of rain two or three times a week, which mitigated the heat and fertilized the earth. Our Blessed Mother and her companion have assured us that they never experienced the slightest inconvenience from the heat while travelling through Provence, though it was the height of summer, and that they were astonished at hearing others complain.

On arriving at Nîsmes no convenient residence could be found for our Blessed Mother, save with the Huguenots, where she refused to go; as did the loving John, when he refused to go under the same roof with Corinthus. She preferred remaining in a small pot-house, where wine was sold. When she entered into this hut, these good people said to her, "Madame, we are poor, but we are good Catholics." She immediately replied, her face all radiant with joy, "May you be blessed by God; how rich you are in your poverty, in having the purity of faith;" and she exhorted them to be firm in their holy faith. This little hut had but one bed, which was far from being clean, and out of repair. Our Blessed Mother assisted her companion in mending it, and said she never

remembered having been better lodged. There came at this juncture a nobleman and his lady, who, having heard that our Blessed Mother had arrived at Nîsmes, went for her, and were astonished at finding her in this miserable hut, and would not have her stay there, so that she was compelled to go with them to their château, where she was treated most honourably. Before leaving she had the pleasure of having an interview with the Rev. Father Fichet, S. J., who expressed a wish to have a foundation at Nîsmes, but our Blessed Mother, actuated in all her actions for the greater glory of God, thanked this good father in all simplicity, but stated she believed that religious employed in instruction would be more useful to a town so filled with Huguenots, and that if Divine Providence wished afterwards to call us there, we should be ready; this reply edified the Rev. Father. In this journey through Provence and Languedoc, our Blessed Mother was obliged to go sometimes by water. One morning, on leaving our house of the Holy Spirit, she was assured by every one that there was danger: "If there be any danger, said she "we must not tempt God; but it is necessary that we should enquire of the boatmen." They assured her, after considering the sky and the clouds, that they would be safely landed before the storm. "That is enough," said our Blessed Mother, "our Blessed Father placed himself once at the mercy of Divine Providence, on the word of the boatmen; for God has vouchsafed to them sufficient knowledge to know their duty;" and on this she embarked.

It often happened that she would take no refreshment till three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and then only milk, black bread, and white cheese, with which she was so perfectly satisfied, that she communicated her joy to others, and kept every one in peace and holy happiness. Our Blessed Mother was well received in several towns, but more especially at Montpellier and Arles; the prelates of the above dioceses being the first to welcome her; she was also visited by the clergy, the nobility, and the magistrature. A deputy from each body delivered her an address, which was a subject of great mortification to her; so that if, according to the spirit of our Blessed Father, she had not been obliged to show a modest civility, she would have buried herself in a cell, not to have heard these praises.

One day while staying with a lady in Provence, who wished, through a feeling of respect, to serve her at table, this person said, "Let us, my dear Mother, bless God; for the last three months I have been suffering daily from fever, but you have brought me health, and now I am completely cured." The superioresses of those convents which our Blessed Mother could not visit, on account of their distance, came by order of their respective bishops, to see and converse with her on business connected with their houses, and all were wonderfully satisfied as well as edified. Before leaving Provence she went to visit the Sainte Baume (a pilgrimage situated in one of the most beautiful parts of the South of France, at an equal distance from Aix, Marseilles, and Toulon,

and supposed to have been the habitation of S. Magdalene, sister of S. Lazarus, for thirty-three years,) with great devotion, and on her return home visited her houses in Dauphiny.

CHAPTER XXV.

OF THE DEATH OF THE FIRST MOTHERS OF OUR INSTITUTE, AND THE INTERIOR TRIALS OF OUR SAINT.

As we have said above, our Blessed Mother returned from this journey in October, 1636. A short time after her arrival, she made an interior review of her conscience with such admirable exactitude and humility, as to astonish our very dear Mother de Châtel. As if God desired to recompense our Blessed Mother by a superabundance of interior trials, for the services which she had performed for His Divine Majesty, her trials and temptations increased, so as to make her undergo a state of martyrdom, of which we shall presently speak. She was delighted that she was not the superioress, and that her soul was in the hands of a Mother in whom she had perfect confidence. Our dear Mother de Châtel, who had a great desire to reduce to writing all that might be useful to our institute, took great delight in making our Blessed Mother speak of the commencement of our institute, and the virtues of our first mothers and sisters, who were deceased. She caused to be written the lives of the sisters, the history of our foundations, and the book of meditations for our annual

retreat, that everything might be seen and corrected by our Mother de Chantal, who took this care on her in a spirit of obedience. She thus spent in tranquillity the remainder of this year (1636) and the commencement of the following year (1637), which was the year in which she suffered much. God, in June, 1637, deprived her of her first daughter and faithful companion, our very dear sister and Mother Faber. Our Blessed Mother went in obedience to Chambéry, where Mother Faber had died; she remained there a few weeks, and was present at the election of a superioress.

On her return to Annecy, the time of our annual retreat having arrived, she prepared to enter therein, with our very honoured Mother Peronne-Marie de Châtel, who, during this retreat, was attacked with the illness that transplanted her from the solitude of this world to the society of the saints, as we piously believe. At the very commencement of her illness, our Blessed Mother had a presentiment of her death, which drew many tears from her eyes, and affected us all deeply. It was an infallible precursor of our loss, which occurred on the 22nd of October. We remarked that this dear sister did not leave this world until she had received our Blessed Mother's benediction and permission to depart hence, on which, without the slightest delay, she expired.

Our Blessed Mother, at this loss, was thoroughly disconsolate, inasmuch as she was then suffering from interior trials that we can never know, save in eternity; and in which she followed,

with the humility and simplicity of a child, the direction of our very dear Mother de Châtel, as the papers which she always carried about with her fully prove, as well as her great care in writing all that this good Mother told her; and which may yet be seen in the letters written, as well to the R. F. Gondran as to an abbess renowned for her piety, and to others whom I shall not name here.

Our chapter having to elect a superioress, cast their eyes on our Blessed Mother, who received this charge, as she wrote, with many tears, and no little repugnance, but as from the hand of God, and in obedience. She often said that this would be the last triennium of her life; that she desired that it might be useful in confirming this house in a strict observance of the rule; and that especially God had given her this light and affection to confirm them in unity; for on unity dependeth the well-being of the house. Having met with the following passage of S. John Chrysostom, "*If all loved, and were loved in return, we should no longer harm one another; all evils would be at a distance from us, sin, as well as the name of vice, would be unknown to us,*" she had these words transcribed, in order that she might repeat them often, and order some of her subjects to copy them into their private rules. In this her last triennium, she was endowed with such extraordinary mildness of character, that it seemed as if her goodness and mildness had completely over-mastered her active and ardent zeal. Our Blessed Mother was not a little anxious about the house, inasmuch as it was rather in debt; but she threw herself on the bosom

of Divine Providence, who, ruling and blessing His faithful servant, gave her the grace, before the end of her triennium, to see herself released from all responsibility. We have often heard her say that the nuns of the Visitation should avoid, as far as possible, being in debt, as the anxiety consequent thereon distracts the mind from interior things.

Scarcely had she been elected superioress, and had made an act of resignation in being deprived of her two dear daughters, Mother Faber and Mother de Châtel, when she received intelligence of the death of Mother Jeanne Charlotte de Bréchard, who died in the odour of sanctity, in our convent at Riom, 18th of Nov., 1637 ; this death renewed the grief and sufferings of our beloved Mother. She wrote to one of her sister-superioresses that her pitiful old age (as she called it) had been well tried ; that her dear companions had gone to heaven, and left her on earth ; that they were fruit ripe and ready to be served at the table of the Heavenly King, but that she had remained on the branch, because she was still quite green, or perhaps all rotten, and worm-eaten ; these are her own words, which she uttered with true humility, and many tears.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A NEW FOUNDATION AT TURIN.

The year 1538 opened fresh events for the ardour and zeal of our Blessed Mother, as God so ordered events, that she was compelled to leave her convent to found our congregation in Piedmont. The bishop of Geneva, (just appointed) the Rev. Father Juste Guérin, Barnabite, confessor to the Serene Infantas and Madame Mecthilde of Savoy, used his interest to found a convent of our institute at Turin, which had been spoken of for more than twenty years. Signora Dona Mecthilde, of Savoy, expressed her wish to be foundress, and accordingly obtained from Rome the requisite bulls, according to Italian usages, as well as the other permissions. In the meanwhile our Blessed Mother prepared everything, inasmuch as His Grace the Archbishop of Turin, and Dona Mecthilde, desired that she should herself come for the foundation, against the unanimous wish of the convent, as they dreaded this voyage on her account, owing to the different climates through which she would have to pass. With the advice and permission of our superiors, she resolved to accomplish this work of charity, saying, that she was still strong enough to render this little service to the Institute; that if any opposition was raised, as would probably be the case, it was better that she should have it to bear than another; moreover, that she

had perfect confidence that she would not die in this journey; but that, nevertheless, should not her hope of seeing us be fulfilled, she and ourselves ought to have no other will than the will of God. We were all mutually affected, as was generally the case when she left on her journeys, though she always left with an inexplicable resignation.

She left this convent on the festival of the Holy Cross, September, 1638, to found the seventy-sixth house of her order. She passed by Chambéry, whence she went to visit the Baroness de Chivron, who received her as a saint. His Grace the Archbishop of Tarentaise sent his grand vicar and several ecclesiastics some little distance to meet her, and invited her himself to spend a few days in the Archiepiscopal Palace, with her little flock, to whom he showed the reliques and antiquities of his Cathedral. He would have wished to have kept his guests for a few days, but our Blessed Mother was up before dawn to commence her voyage. The good Archbishop, perceiving this, urged her again to stop, but while doing so, the Theologal of Aoste, confessor to our sisters in that convent, arrived; he was commissioned to inform her that Dona Mecthilde, who was coming to meet our Blessed Mother, would be in three days at the Val-d'Aoste, which made her yet more pressing. The Archbishop of Tarentaise, with unequalled good nature, accompanied our holy Mother for more than two leagues, not wishing to leave her until he saw her out of all danger. She passed the mount S. Bernard; and though it

was raining all day, a number of ladies met her at the entry of the Val-d'Aoste. Dona Mecthilde arrived there on the same day. As soon as the good Signora perceived our Blessed Mother, she was seized with great joy ; it seemed as if a single glance at our saint's features had effaced her long and weary trials. She kissed her hands with much avidity before our good Mother could prevent it, and acknowledged that she felt that towards her, which we should always feel towards holy persons. She remained five days with our beloved sisters of Val-d'Aoste, which she left on the 26th of September. They halted at Châtillon ; while on the road, our Blessed Mother was saluted with cannon and pieces of artillery from the neighbouring castles, which was done as much in her honour as for Dona Mecthilde, and other distinguished personages who accompanied her.

Our Blessed Mother was much fatigued during two days of rough travelling ; and it was no small relief to her and her companions, on entering the plain of Italy, to find some refreshment at the house of Marchese de Borgofranco, who received them in a style that would not have been tolerated by our Blessed Mother, had it not been for Dona Mecthilde, who deserved to be treated as a princess. Our Blessed Mother descended at a private residence at Yvrai ; but the Bishop of that city hearing of it, arrived, though it was night, telling her that his carriage was at the door to convey her to the convent of S. Clara. This holy prelate accompanied her as far as the convent, and told the religious that he confided

to their keeping the greatest treasure that was then in the world. It is certain that a humble, loving, and faithful soul is a treasure in the sight of God and men. The Bishop of Yvrai had her supper conveyed to her from the palace; and on the morrow he came himself to say mass, at which the good religious of S. Clara executed several choice pieces of music. Words would be wanting to express the kindness and hospitality shown to our Blessed Mother and her companions by these good religious. They received her advice with an affection altogether filial, and compelled her to give them her maternal benediction, and wept much when she was compelled to leave them to pursue her journey. The Bishop of Yvrai could not refuse the Baron du Perron, who requested them to come into his house, which seemed to be rather a *Louvre* than the château of a private nobleman. He had prepared a magnificent collation for them, but our Blessed Mother, with her religious and perfect modesty, refused to partake thereof; which edified all who were present, and made them regard her as a saint. The Baron du Perron said that his intention in requesting our Blessed Mother to enter his dwelling, was thereby to draw the merciful regard of our Lord on him and his, as he firmly believed would now be the case.

At last our Blessed Mother and her religious arrived at the gates of Turin, on the 30th of September, where the principal ladies of the city met them; but Dona Mecthilde received a letter from the queen, ordering her to take our Mother

de Chantal to the Valentino, where she was with her son, who was lying dangerously ill, in order that she might see him and pray for him. Our holy Mother was much mortified on seeing the high esteem in which she was held; but she had no other alternative than obedience. She arrived at the Valentino at 4 P. M., and was received with every mark of affection, joy, and esteem by her majesty. She took her with our sisters to her dear patient, telling him that it was the Mother de Chantal, who had such influence with God, and the daughters of the Blessed François de Sales. He gave them his hand one after another, recommending himself especially to the prayers of our Blessed Mother, though he spoke so low that he could scarcely be heard. They were much consoled and edified at seeing him so modest and patient, though in a burning fever. Her majesty then took our holy Mother apart, to speak to her in private, and to pray with her. This great and pious princess desired about 5 or 6 P. M. to say the Litany of our Lady, and the third part of the Rosary. She made our Blessed Mother kneel down between her and a lay-brother of the order of S. Francis, who enjoyed a great reputation of sanctity. These three formed one part of the choir, and all the people the other, as much to reply to the Litany as to say in a loud voice the Ave Maria. During the time of this devotion when her majesty was making supplication for the health of His Royal Highness her son, our Blessed Mother was moved to pray for the prosperity of Charles Emmanuel, her majesty's se-

cond son, and could not be persuaded to pray for the health of the patient. She then rose from her knees, so fully assured that it was God's will that the youngest should ascend the throne, that she only consoled her majesty on the death of her son, and exhorted her to resignation, while the others were buoying her up with hopes of his recovery. She left the Valentino at 8 P. M. Dona Mecthilde, though obliged to return to her majesty that night, would not allow our Blessed Mother and her religious to take possession of their new residence alone. Without relating in detail any of the difficulties which they encountered, as well for the establishment of the house as the fulmination of the bulls, it is enough to say, that one less adroit and less esteemed than our Blessed Mother, could never have unravelled the difficulty. Before the cloister was established, their highnesses desired to see our Blessed Mother, whom they received with much joy and devotion; and especially Dona Mecthilde spoke to her in all sincerity of heart; I say, with the sincerity of a heart, who, for twenty years, aspired for the Visitation; but she had been hindered by state reasons, and family considerations.

Our Blessed Mother venerated the Holy Winding Sheet at Turin, in the church of San Giovanni, for the queen went herself to request it to be exhibited, as well as a number of other relics; especially the wood of the Holy Cross, and the Sacred Thorns of the Crown of the King of Heaven and earth. Before these divine treasures the heart of our Blessed Mother was melted in devotion and

holy reverence. She remained so long in prayer, that she would in all probability have spent the night there, which, as it was drawing on, compelled the queen to re-ascend her carriage and go to her son, whom she recommended to the prayers of our Blessed Mother; but it pleased God to take him from this world, as had been foreseen by her.

The Carmelites and the Sisters of the Annunciation desired much to see our Blessed Mother, which was granted to them; and they were much attached to her, ever preserving a high esteem of her virtue, a feeling impressed deeply on all who had ever conversed with her. All could read the sanctity of her soul in her countenance, and spoke of her with honour and veneration. The Piedmontese ladies, as long as the cloister was not established, could not leave our holy mother, and were much pleased with our manner of living. The Nuncio also did her the honour to visit her; which was productive of great good to the whole order, inasmuch as he was disabused of several things that he had heard against our congregation. The Archbishop of Turin gave his own niece, whom he loved much; she was the first received. Her majesty also favoured our establishment and our Blessed Mother. She often had her to dine with her, conversing with her two or three hours respecting her soul. It was generally supposed that she would never part with our Blessed Mother, which caused much apprehension; but God had otherwise provided; for when we thought least of it, our good diocesan, who was then at Turin, ordered her to return, on account of the approach

of the Spanish army. She wrote to her majesty to ask permission to leave; this great princess immediately came to her herself, and gave her her reply in person, and left her with many tears. Our Blessed Mother had scarcely time given her to bid adieu to her friends, so much was she pressed. She left our dear sisters deeply affected at losing her so soon, but greatly consoled at having been instructed and trained by so worthy a mother.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OUR BLESSED MOTHER EXERTS HER INFLUENCE TO ESTABLISH THE FATHERS OF THE MISSION IN SAVOY.

On the 19th of April, 1639, our Blessed Mother left Turin; the Marquis de Pianesse, and the Marquis de Lubin, who lent her his carriage, came to see her off. His Grace the Archbishop of Turin came to give her his benediction. Dona Mecthilde accompanied her a league from Turin, and left her with much regret. Our Blessed Mother was left under the charge of M. de Piotton, a very worthy ecclesiastic, and at all times a great servant of God, and a faithful friend of our Institute. Our Blessed Mother loved him as her brother, and so she called him; he had assisted her in the most difficult business connected with our convent at Turin. She arrived at our house at Pignerol very late and much fatigued. She saw several who came to converse with her,

as much for her own merit as because she was the mother-in-law and mother of their governor and his wife. She remained but a short time with our dear sisters, but, however, she managed to speak to them all in private; but she was so urged to leave Piedmont, that on the very evening of her arrival they wished her to continue her journey, and that not without reason; as on the fourth day of her leaving Turin it was beseiged by the Spaniards. Our Blessed Mother returned through Dauphiny from Pignerol as far as Ambrun. She ran a great many risks on the road, which made her companion, our beloved Sister Jeanne Teresa Picotau, grow pale with fright; whereon our Blessed Mother, smiling devoutly, exhorted her to resignation, and a complete abandonment of herself into the hands of Divine Providence. She came to us in the end of May, and spent the remainder of the year 1639 with us, in which God permitted her to suffer much from her maternal apprehensions respecting our beloved sisters at Turin, as they were in the midst of the battle, and suffering all the horrors of poverty caused by the siege; as our convent at Turin was placed between the French and Spanish batteries. The devil made use of her maternal affection as an instrument to distract her yet more regarding the dangers which our dear sisters ran from the insolence, as well as the cruelty of the soldiers; to all this she opposed her ordinary remedy, which was the thought of God; remembering that everything occurred either by His will or permission, and that nothing was out of the cycle of His Providence. She lost

no opportunity of writing to these beloved sisters, to encourage them to bear their tribulation with a generous virtue ; assuring them that amid her fears she had a hope that God would cover them like little chickens under the wings of His protection, and that no evil would happen to them ; which was true, yet not without something of the marvellous, as we have said in the History of the *Foundation*, and these dear Sisters attributed their escape to the efficacious prayers of our Blessed Mother. Thus she was in great anxiety for them, and recommended them to the prayers of all our houses.

"During the Siege of Turin, which lasted more than fourteen months, our sisters being situated between the French and Spanish batteries, stood in need of special courage, and assistance from God, to preserve them from dying of fright, as they saw the cannon balls enter the walls, shatter the tiles and planks, pass over their beds, and fall in the refectory and in the choir. M. Trintart, our confessor, exposed his life a thousand times, working both night and day, in carrying earth and stones to make trenches and fortifications round our cloister. And in the evening he armed himself at all points to act as guard, whilst our sisters passed the night in profound peace in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Our mother incessantly invoked the aid of our holy Founder, and made a vow to offer at his tomb a silver tablet representing her convent, if it pleased God to save it through his intercession ; this she obtained, since the community were preserved

from any accident, and the house was but little damaged. The soldiers respected even our temporal possessions. A poor boy, who worked in our garden, had his leg carried away by a cannon ball; he had time to receive the last Sacraments, and to die as a good Christian. So many cannon balls were found in our garden and house, that our sisters were unable to restrain their tears when they thought how God had preserved them, and that they were respected by the soldiers; this was owing to the charity we exercised towards those who were sick and wounded, who, after their recovery, undertook, by turns, to defend us from the insults of the other, and this without our asking them; they, moreover, declared that they should never forget the kindness of the religious of Savoy. Our holy mother, during the siege, found means to send us letters, to console us and confirm us in God, who permitted that we should be afflicted with grief by the loss of our illustrious benefactress, Madame Mecthilde."*

On returning from Turin our Blessed Mother suffered not a little from the climate of the country and fatigue, and her limbs were much weakened, but her mind was perfectly sound and healthy.

It must be here remarked that on her return from her journeys, we invariably observed in her an increase of perfection, uncommon even with her; though at all times it was easy to perceive that this Blessed Spouse was continually proceeding from

* Extract concerning the Foundation of the Convent of the Visitation at Turin.

virtue to virtue, and that this true flower of Paradise was fast ripening by the heat of the Divine Sun. Our Blessed Mother had never ceased acting for the glory of God and the welfare of her neighbour. She had long desired to obtain some worthy workmen for the diocese of Geneva, which was dear to her, as being the cradle of our holy founder. After having thought of various means of putting her plan into execution, and after having recommended the affair to our holy Father, Divine Providence urged her to take steps in the matter. She requested the Commander de Sillery, Founder of our house, in the Rue S. Antoine, at Paris, to make a foundation of the fathers of the mission in this diocese. This great servant of God, who held our Blessed Mother in high esteem, willingly acceded to her request. She extremely rejoiced at seeing a plan which she had so long earnestly desired at last in a fair way of being commenced; and accordingly demanded missioners from M. Vincent (S. Vincent of Paul) founder of the order. Our Blessed Mother felt a lively pleasure in preparing all that was necessary for their own apartments, as well as for their sacristy, as she was wont to say, "When I think that these good fathers will go amid the thorns of difficulties to withdraw from vice and error the dear sheep of our Blessed Father and pastor, it seems that I am much younger."

When the missioners arrived in February, 1640, she evinced a joy which words could not express. So also when the porteress or any of the other sisters heard of any conversion resulting from the preaching or other exercises of these pious apos-

tles, they felt much delight in running to tell our Blessed Mother of it at the recreation. S. Vincent, on sending his dear children to work in this diocese, ordered them to put their full confidence in Mother de Chantal, and impart to her all their difficulties; which they did with a humility and simplicity, which she greatly admired; she gave them all the time that they required, and often excited us to acts of virtue by their example.

Our saint employed the whole of the spring and summer of this year (1640) in reperusing the *Fetites Coutumes*, the *Foundations*, which were then written in part, and the Lives of our first Mothers, occasionally correcting them herself. Believing the current triennium to be her last, she made a formal resignation, and by great adroitness, succeeded in persuading our diocesan to erase her name from the catalogue of candidates. She also provided for the disengagement of our very honoured Mother Marie Aimée de Blonay, then superioress at Lyons. Our Blessed Mother had long desired her return to this house, and the time had at last arrived. God willed that she who had formerly been the youngest, and most tenderly beloved daughter of our Blessed Father and Mother should be the last superioress of her, who, being the mother of all, was only her inferior by the act of her own humility.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OF THE DEATH OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF BOURGES.

On hearing that His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Lyons had consented to the return of our very dear Mother Marie Aimée de Blonay, our Blessed Mother was truly delighted, and made preparation for her final deposition. As she wished to deprive herself of all in order to be more thoroughly useful in heavenly matters, our Lord put forth His hand, and called to Himself Mgr. André Frémiot, Archbishop of Bourges, the only brother of our Blessed Mother, who, through a spirit of prophecy, wrote to him about three months before his decease, beseeching him to prepare for death, while she herself would do the same, as they had neither of them long to live. Since we have spoken above of the virtues this good Archbishop had received from God, it will not be foreign to our purpose to say a word respecting his happy death; this good prelate had persevered in that happy state of piety which God had led him to embrace during his dangerous illness, of which we have spoken above, for fifteen years. His goodness and amiability of temper was so remarkable, that the late bishop of Geneva (brother to our Blessed Father) was wont to say that he believed that God and the angels were amorous of this good soul. His alms and charities were innumerable, for he was very wealthy,

and gave much of what he had to the poor, and during the latter part of his life he fed two or three hundred, procuring them work at his abbey of Ferriére. If it had not been for his great charity and the great use he was of to others, he would have joined the Fathers of the Oratory of S. Philip Neri, or the Carthusians, several years before his death. He wrote as follows on this subject to his blessed sister: "At last, my only and dear sister, I have decided that I must deprive myself of the pleasure I have anticipated, of conversing with God alone in a religious life. A great many reasons have been alleged against my retreat; this is, I can assure you, most painful to me, for I must live at Paris as at Paris, keep a regular suite and table, and not give up company; this is a source of great distraction to that interior devotion to which I feel myself every day more and more called. If I were to obey my own inclination, I should enter either among the Carthusians or the Fathers of the Oratory of S. Philip Neri, not to become one of their order, but to live retired from the world, and to have some one whom I should regard as my superior, and so do all that he should order me." These are the very words of this good prelate, whom God was thus preparing for death. He was taken ill in the commencement of 1641, of which he wrote to our Blessed Mother when he was cured; she smiled, and looking at the crucifix on the table, exclaimed, "He is cured, but it is not for a long while!" She wrote to him immediately to pray for a happy death, and to pray for her when he

offered up the Holy Sacrifice. We do not, however, believe that she was certain that this year would terminate both his and her mortal career, for she occasionally hinted at the contrary, telling us that she hoped she would not pass her seventy-third year, but she felt quite strong enough.

The Bishop of Châlons, nephew to the Archbishop of Bourges, and his niece, Madame de Toulonjon, the only daughter of our Blessed Mother, went to Paris on business; but how good is Divine Providence! it led them there to receive the last breath of their excellent uncle. On the day of their arrival, while his Grace was saying mass at the Minims, to whom he was much attached, he felt exceedingly giddy, and had great difficulty in finishing his mass, but the giddiness passed away after he had breakfasted. The Bishop of Châlons, the Abbot of S. Satur, and Madame de Toulonjon, went to dine with him. He ate with appetite, but at the end of dinner he was immediately put to bed and bled, whereon he rallied so much, that on the morrow he arose to say mass, according to his custom, it being the festival of the Ascension, but he was prevented. He, however, heard it, kneeling the whole time, and communicated; at twelve that day he was attacked with a fit of apoplexy, when he was again bled; he, however, again rallied, but remained in a state of great languor; on the morrow (Friday) he was taken with a second fit of apoplexy, and bled in the feet, on which he rallied at intervals, when Extreme Unction was given him, he himself replying to the prayers.

From time to time he gave utterance to some very devout words, evincing his thorough resignation. He also gave to all present his paternal benediction. After this he was perfectly languid, and when he awoke up, called on our Lord with a loud voice, thus evidencing of his spiritual state. His cries and groans drew tears from all present, and especially from his dear niece; nevertheless, the medical attendants persisted in asserting that he did not suffer in the least, and that his cries were simply the effects of the apoplexy and the convulsions, which he did not feel. On Saturday he had a slight interval of repose, and received the Blessed Sacrament in Viaticum, from the Curé of S. Paul. As the last remedy, the physicians bled him in both the temples; he was then perfectly senseless, and was obliged to be held down, as his struggles were very great. Since his bleeding he never left off crying to God, and was perfectly restless, and from that hour he was seized with a fever, which never left him till the following Monday, when his spirit returned to God, between eleven and twelve, A. M, on the 13th of May, being assisted by the Minim Fathers, for whom he had a great affection.

As our Blessed Father said to his devout Philothée, that great haste is shown after our death to bury us as quickly as possible, the spirit of this good Archbishop having returned to heaven, we must now speak of the place where his body was to be laid. The first idea was to convey it to his Abbey of Ferriére; and he was accordingly embalmed; but the Abbot of S. Satur remonstrated,

saying that he ought to be buried in the church of our Sisters of the Visitation, at Paris, at S. Antoine, as he had consecrated the church; that he was brother to the foundress of the order, and one of the commissioners for the beatification of the founder. Madame de Toulonjon was exceedingly anxious that her dear uncle should be interred in the church of our convent, and our dear sister, Hélène Angelique l'Huillier alleged such reasons in her letter to the bishop of Châlons, that it was at once decided that he should be buried at S. Mary's. His body was exposed for two days, when all Paris came in crowds to see him who was as beautiful as ever, his illness being so brief, that he was not in the least emaciated. He was at last conveyed in great pomp to our house, in the Rue S. Antoine, where he reposed for one night; the whole church was covered with black; one halfof it was raised as a platform for the bishops, and other persons of quality; the office was performed by the bishop of Amiens, and four other prelates, with white mitres, assisted him. The funeral sermon was preached by Monsignor Pierre Camus, bishop of Belley, wherein he spoke of the heart and excellent dispositions of the deceased prelate towards his friends and enemies. An anniversary of masses was established in our convents at Ferriére and at Dijon, where his heart was deposited; on the morrow of his decease, ten crowns each was sent to fifty churches and convents in Paris, for masses for the dead. There were also solemn masses for the repose of his soul at Paris, at Dijon, at Bourges, and in all our

houses; God permitting that great benefit should be done for him who had done so much for the poor. Our Blessed Mother heard of his decease, as she was about to communicate; she received the news with her wonted resignation, crying, however, a little; after which she went on as usual, showing, however, that she felt his loss deeply. She told us that she fully expected to hear of his death; but she was more deeply affected to see herself, as older than her brother, yet lingering on earth, as being less prepared to go to God. She begged all the houses of our order, to whom she wrote, to pray for the soul of this dear deceased with great humility, and to ask God to prepare her for his last passage. She asked for these prayers for more than a year.

CHAPTER XXIX.

OUR HOLY MOTHER AGAIN RESIGNS HER OFFICE AS SUPERIORESS; HER HUMILITY AND CHARITY.

The period of her deposition having arrived, our Blessed Mother resigned her office with all her heart, and for the remainder of her life. She held a chapter in order to inform us that she would not again take that office on her. We all burst into tears; she spoke with the ardour of a seraph, and the humility of a true saint; she asked pardon of all our sisters, adding, that she asked it particularly of those whom she had at all dissatisfied; assuring them that she had not done

so purposely, and that she had only acted as she had conscientiously believed to be her duty. After this (a thing that had never before been done in chapter,) she came and embraced us all, one after the other, as we were standing in our rank, telling us that it was her last farewell as superioress, without permitting us to say what our affection prompted, inasmuch as she assured us that her being superioress did not increase her love for us one atom. She also spoke of the virtues and capacity of our very dear Mother Marie Aimée de Blonay, as the majority of the community had never seen her. Neither the efforts of those of our sisters who were the counsellors, nor the tears of the whole community, could persuade her to let her name be again placed in the catalogue; she even forbade us to think of it.

Lastly, on the Thursday, after the festival of the Ascension, (1641), our very dear Mother Marie Aimée de Blonay was canonically and unanimously elected superioress, according to the rule, which gave great satisfaction to our Blessed Mother, who desired much to see that dear Mother elected; and she thanked the community with a holy gracefulness for the entire confidence they had shown in her by this election. Our Blessed Mother gave us two lectures in the community, instead of this dear mother, who had not arrived from our convent at Bourg; telling us how we should behave to newly-elected superiors when not known to the community; she especially recommended us not to lessen one another in the estimation of our new mother, as she held those in great detesta-

tion who related the past faults of their sisters; that we ought to act as our Lord, who forgot the past; that if she perceived them to be deficient in this point, she would get them some severe penances; that a superioress elected had only to give an account for what was done during the time of her government, and not of the late government: moreover, we could not speak thereof without sinning against charity, unless obliged so to do, and that it should then be done in a disinterested manner; that she herself, who had been our superioress, when obliged to converse with our dear Mother, would speak to her of the good dispositions and talents of each of the sisters, because every deposed superioress was compelled to do so; but that she would be exceedingly scrupulous in speaking of past faults, and that she was sometimes astonished at meeting with souls who took pleasure in speaking of faults committed years ago, because it would thereby prejudice their neighbour; and that they might rest assured that God would measure to them according to their own measure to others. She told us also, that she had abstained from speaking to us much of the virtues of our dear Mother Marie Aimée de Blonay before the election, fearing lest she should mingle in that which ought to be left to the Holy Spirit alone, but that she would now acknowledge to them that this election had filled her with joy. She wrote to this dear Mother to hasten her arrival, and it was easy to be seen that our Blessed Mother pined to be under obedience. She prepared her bed and room for her, and at the recrea-

tion exhorted us to love this dear Mother, to obey her, and to support and love one another; when she would meet us on leaving the recreation she would say, "My dear sisters, love, love, love." On the day of our beloved Mother Superioress's arrival, our saint having heard of it, hastened to meet her with great joy, and throwing herself on her, embraced her with great affection, and said, "Behold my mother, my daughter, my sister, my heart, and my soul." On rising from her knees, she wished us to go altogether to return thanks to our Lord and our Blessed Father for this happy arrival. She said with a smile to one of our sisters, "What have I to do more in this life, since my dear Annecy is so well provided with a mother such as I could desire?" She also said to our dear Mother de Blonay, "My dear mother, I have desired to see you for several years in this house, for I have asked this of God during the last nine months." In the morning, the day after her arrival, our saint went to our new mother's room to wish her good morning, and to know how she had spent the night; and paid her all the respect due from an inferior to a superioress.

Nevertheless, in a few days a great contention arose between these two dear mothers. Our good mother superioress would not suffer our holy and venerable Foundress, who was in her seventieth year, to take the lowest rank with a lay-sister; but our saint loved this place with such holy jealousy, that she would take no other; when spoken to about it, she only expressed her great regret that any attention should be paid thereto,

expressing her astonishment at their imagining that the lowest place was any humiliation; that there was nothing more honourable for a religious than to observe her rule; and when our good Mother de Blonay desired to hinder her from telling her faults, and kneeling down to receive the censures in the community, our saint exclaimed, "Alas! our dear mother has deprived me of all satisfaction and pleasure." This contention between them lasted so long, that the superiors were obliged to interfere, but our holy mother had so prejudiced them on her side, that they decided in her favour; and neither the Bishop of Geneva nor our spiritual father would hear of any pretext to order our saint to take any other rank than the last, saying, that in the kingdom of Heaven the "last shall be first;" that they should allow our Blessed Mother to enjoy the repose of a simple inferior; that Jesus Christ, the Maker of the world and founder of the Church, made Himself the last of all men, and that before going to His Passion He threw Himself at the feet of all His disciples.

This decision was a subject of great consolation to our Blessed Mother. Writing to some of the deposed sisters, she told them of her joy of being on a equal with an inferior, and exhorted them to profit by their time. She especially inculcated in those sisters who had been deposed from the office of superioress, that they should reserve no authority nor pretension of government; that *deposed* meant *deprived*, and entirely resigning all government; that it would

only be an act of hypocrisy to resign the charge and preserve the air of authority, that it was to act as Rachel, leaving her country but carrying with her her idol. She earnestly besought our dear Mother de Blonay to direct and mortify her, and to exercise her in virtue, and not to speak to her any more of temporal affairs; that, thank God, as the house was no longer in debt, she would not meddle with temporal matters; that the things of the earth were disagreeable to her, and that every communication connected therewith would hurt her much; that the only liberty which she desired was to see the letters written by our convents, and to have the sisters, whom she employed in writing, to reply to them, requesting a holiday for this purpose. Since our Blessed Mother was deposed, she seemed so extraordinarily mild, amiable, and in such continual occupation of God and eternity, that several of us trembled, fearing that this sacred lamp was about to expire. She occasionally told us how delighted she was in considering how our very honoured mother-superioress was beloved in this community, and that, as for herself, she felt the like affection as a grandmother for her grandchildren; thus making comparisons which tended always to humble herself, as well as induce us to love her yet more, and allure us to greater union, in the hope that a holy joy and repose would yet preserve to us this true and worthy mother of our hearts.

CHAPTER XXX.

PREPARATIONS FOR HER LAST JOURNEY TO FRANCE.

Our convents at Paris and Móulins had been urging our Blessed Mother for the last eighteen months again to visit them; but she had always replied, that she would act as the Bishop of Geneva should please to order. This good prelate had often written, and said that he did not wish our Blessed Mother to leave Annecy again. But our dear sisters at Moulins elected as their superioress in 1641 our holy Mother de Chantal, though her name was not on their catalogue. When our Blessed Mother heard of this election, she exclaimed, "I renounce all superiority;" and she informed the deposed mother and sisters in very humble language, that their election was null and void; that she did not again purpose accepting the charge of superioress, unless expressly commanded to do so by her superiors, and that she hoped they would not do so, and that it was but right that the remainder of her life should be spent under obedience. The good Madame de Montmorency, perceiving that our Blessed Mother refused to come, wrote to her thus: "These refusals, my dear Mother, do not discourage me; you shall come, and God will do that for me which men will not do." When the religious at Annecy perceived that our religious in France again desired to see our Blessed Mother, they opposed it, saying, that if at

her age she died out of Savoy, they should never have her body ; they sent an express to court, requesting letters from His Highness, prohibiting her leaving Savoy. But during this parleying, God did for Madame de Montmorency what men would not do ; the Bishop of Autun having written to the Bishop of Geneva, his lordship requested our Blessed Mother to give him her opinion of this journey. She replied in obedience, that it was her opinion that she ought to go, and that if it was his command, she would regard it as the will of God ; consequently, his lordship being of opinion that God vouchsafed peculiar light to founders and foundresses of orders, granted his permission. Our very dear Mother de Blonay, and our chapter, perceiving the opinion of our Blessed Mother, and in consideration of the wishes of the very virtuous Madame de Montmorency, did not oppose her departure, and it was perceived that as soon as this journey had been decided on, as if our Blessed Mother were desirous of making a last effort for the good of the institute, and finishing the remainder of her life in its service, her countenance completely changed ; she spoke to all our sisters with maternal kindness. Contrary to her former custom, she sent for the friends of our convent, to speak to them before her departure.

Speaking to a very pious gentleman of the town, she replied on his expressing a fear that they would not again see her, "Be assured that, living or dead, I shall return again." Speaking also to M. Piotton, whom she had called

her brother for more than twenty years, she told him that she left with great joy, because she believed that it was the will of God; and added with admirable ardour, "Do you see, my dear brother, that I only wish to do the will of God; and if I only knew that if it was His will that I should drown myself, I would run to throw myself into the lake." She wrote to nearly all our houses to bid them farewell, and to beg they would pray God to bless her journey; she left also a number of signed sheets of paper for letters, dictated to the sister who wrote for her, in order that she might copy them after her departure. She told some of our sisters that she had never undertaken a journey with such joy, because she foresaw that it would be very profitable to some of the houses, and of her soul in particular, having a great desire to consult His Grace the Archbishop of Sens, and M. Vincent; that this house was in such good condition, and had so excellent a Mother, that it was absolutely necessary for her to go and work somewhere else, and that she felt great pleasure in leaving our very honoured Mother Marie Aimée de Blonay at Annecy. Having spoken with all the sisters in private, she again wished to speak to us in public, exhorting us to mutual love; knowing that all happiness was contained in this love. She told us that we knew where to seek for it; and added, that her place was at the foot of the cross; that she would endeavour, God aiding her, to remain there with all fidelity, in order that we might meet her there; that she was much pleased at our hav-

ing so good a Mother, and that this idea alone made her leave with a light heart, because she no longer felt any anxiety for this house, but only an unchangeable love.

After this she made us take our places in due rank, and without allowing us to go on our knees, embraced us one after another, whispering to each of us the advice most suitable to our individual state; and lastly, gave her benediction to all. One of the sisters, perceiving that this worthy Mother was bidding us adieu in so extraordinary a manner, and with such gaiety, whereas she had always left us in tears, said, "Mother, we shall not see you again." "What, then, my daughter?" replied she gaily. "But let us pray to our Lord that you may return." "No, no," said she, "His holy Will be done; we shall meet either in this world or in the next." On the 28th of July, 1641, our Blessed Mother left this house; the convent gate was lined by several persons to get a last sight of her. She did a thing which she had never done before, giving her hand on either side to the ladies who were waiting for her; every one was in the street to bid her adieu; even the sick went to the window to see her pass by, and say farewell. Alas! little did we think that it would be the last, for our Blessed Mother was in perfect health and strength, so as to lead us to hope that she would live fifteen years more. She saw our sisters of Rumilly, Belley, and Lyons, and shed everywhere so great an odour of sanctity, as to make people observe that they had never seen the like in her before. She spent four

days in our house at Belle-Cour, in Lyons, and spoke to our sisters with the zeal and ardour of a saint. Her fervour and holy joy increased on venerating our Blessed Father's heart, and she pursued her way towards Moulins with a holy joy, which she imparted to those who were with her. Madame de Montmorency having received a letter, stating the day on which our Blessed Mother would arrive, fastened it to a pillar, so that all our sisters might see it and read it one after another.

It would be superfluous to speak of the joy with which our Blessed Mother was received at Moulins, especially by Madame de Montmorency. She would not take the place of superioress, keeping her place as the last, and allowing the assistant to act; she would not even give the benediction at Compline, but inclined, like the rest, to receive the benediction from the assistant. She commenced immediately doing something to the advantage of the house at Moulins, speaking to all the sisters respecting the election of a superioress, sending one to Vannes, and the deposed sister to Sémur. But who can speak of the reciprocal happiness experienced by our saint and Madame de Montmorency? We must here be silent; words would not do it justice; for there was such union between these two great servants of our Lord, that our saint has said that her heart was indivisible and inseparable with that of this very honoured lady. God, however, interrupted their reciprocal happiness, as the houses at Paris again demanded her as soon as they heard that she was at Moulins. The queen

even took the trouble to write to our prelate, so that our Blessed Mother received an obedience to proceed to Paris, and her Majesty sent her one of her litters to meet her. Our saint passed through Nevers, the Bishop of which city begged her to spend a day more with him. "Since, my Lord, you command it, I shall do so, but I shall deprive my daughter of that day;" which was the case, as she only spent one night at S. Satur with her beloved and pious daughter Madame de Toulonjon. She hoped, however, to see her on her return from Paris. The queen desired her to pass by S. Germain, where she was; she spent two hours in her company, and wished much to have some *souvenir* of her, that she might keep it as a precious relic, and her Majesty treated her with that respect due to her great and singular piety.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OF THE LAST JOURNEY OF OUR BLESSED MOTHER TO PARIS, AND OTHER OF OUR CONVENTS IN FRANCE.

We shall not attempt to describe the joy with which our Blessed Mother was received in our convents at Paris; suffice it to say, that everywhere she left behind her the perfume of her deep humility, the sweetness of her holy meekness, and delighted all by the zeal with which she kept the rule. A number of persons came to consult her at Paris, and her eagerness to satisfy

every one induced her to rise at three or four o'clock A. M. to say her prayers, in order that her time might be at her own disposal, rendering alway to God that which was due to Him, and then to her neighbour that which is his due. Our dear sisters at Paris wrote to us, saying that they were delighted at the incomparable fidelity of our Blessed Mother, in not leaving a quarter of an hour of her mental prayer unfinished, although her business was so pressing; once, when she had not slept all night, and had arisen early in the morning, she experienced, at the time of mental prayer, a little drowsiness, on perceiving which she immediately stood up, and thus spent the remainder of the time looking like an angel.

The Carmelite mothers desired much to see this Blessed Mother in their convent, which she willingly granted, as she could not refuse her neighbours anything that they might legitimately expect from her. God wished to show the virtue of His humble servant in such a manner, that our dear sisters at Paris had enough to do to satisfy those who came to have their rosaries and medals touched by our Blessed Mother. Every one acknowledged that the virtue they had previously admired in her was but a dim sketch of her present state; but in a short time this bright light of our little congregation was destined to set. Before leaving Paris, where she had given such contentment and joy to our houses, she sent to receive the benediction, and recommend herself to the prayers of His Eminence the Cardinal de Larochefoucault, who was esteemed

as a saint. He told her that he had greater need of her prayers and her blessings than she had of his, thus testifying the high esteem in which he held her.

It seemed that our Blessed Mother was perfectly well on leaving Paris, but it was her extreme fervour and zeal which kept her up, and induced her to say that our Lord had given her fresh lungs to enable her to speak as much as she had done. She had the consolation she had requested of speaking at length with his Grace the Archbishop of Sens, and she was by this means much comforted; it being the will of God that her life, after having had to endure so much, should end in a loving and virtuous peace. As if she had foreseen her approaching departure, she asked how she should prepare herself for her last journey; and as a commencement for this preparation, she made a general review of all her life and her soul in the hands of this worthy prelate, whom she greatly honoured. On her arrival in our convent at Nevers, she renewed her vows for the last time on the festival of the Presentation of our Lady at the Temple, according to our custom. She was taken very ill on the 24th and 25th of November, but took neither relaxation nor repose, for on the 25th she rose at five A. M. to make her prayer in the choir with the community. When our dear sisters expressed their apprehensions, she said to them: "My daughters, we should always desire what God wills, and die when He pleases." She added, that she did not at all like their showing such eagerness in attending on her, nor their giv-

ing her any delicacies. "Poverty," said she, "humility, and simplicity form our rules."

She had just arrived from S. Germain, where the queen had showed her many favours, and from Paris, where she had been honoured as a saint; she did not even refer to the circumstances; and when asked about them, she seemed to have had no recollection of anything that had occurred, and her discourse was on the perfect observance of the rule, and especially on mutual love, and on the spirit of humility. She expressed her great sorrow that our sisters at Nevers should chant litanies in the choir arranged in four parts, as it was contrary to the humility required of the poor daughters of S. Mary, seeing that it was sure to attract the admiration of the people. She also expressed to our dear sisters of Nevers her great regret at their having the door of their church too highly ornamented, and desired them to write to all our houses, acknowledging their fault in this respect, and cautioning others not to follow their example. "Oh! we should so greatly love poverty and simplicity, as our dear founder did. This architectural beauty is quite opposed to these blessed virtues." She also said, "If any one will purchase this door, it will be better to sell it."

She met also at the convent at Nevers one of our dear sisters who had been sent away from our convent at Chartres, inasmuch as she could no longer render them the service for which she had been sent to that foundation, having become a cripple, and there being no hope of her recovery; our Blessed Mother cured her,

and though she did all in her power to conceal this miracle, it was nevertheless apparent to all. Our dear sister, the superioress of Nevers, on bidding her adieu, exclaimed, "Oh, God! must I, then, my dear Mother, think that I shall not again see you?" She replied, that we must serve our Lord with a great and generous detachment, and set no bounds to our spoliation of self: "You have, my dear daughter, you have spoken to me most affectionately; I remember perfectly that our Blessed Father, when he used to leave me, would never allow me to say that we should not meet for some time, and that it gave me great grief. This saint was wont to say to me, 'My mother, we should always adore the will of God respecting ourselves, and go where He calls us, without any other desire than the accomplishment of His Holy Will.'"

CHAPTER XXXII.

OF THE HAPPY DEATH OF OUR BLESSED MOTHER.

Nothing is lasting under the sun, and the most beautiful lives end when we least expect it. Our holy Mother, who had only gone to Paris for a while, where she had dazzled all with her sanctity, like the sun in mid-day glory, had scarcely arrived at Moulins before she showed signs of her approaching end, and that she must sink into the bed of death, which was not unforeseen, though it was at the moment unexpected.

She had looked forward for her death for the last forty years, in a careful practice of every virtue, but she now desired to prepare for it yet more seriously; and accordingly feeling that her departure hence was at hand, she went, on Saturday, the 7th of December, the Vigil of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, though exceedingly fatigued and worn out, to the refectory, and remained kneeling during the time of the collation of the sisters with her arms crossed, in imitation of the zealous apostle of the Indies, and repeated twice the following words: "*O Mater Dei! memento meî.* Remember me, O Mother of God;" then adding in French, "*O très Sainte Mère de Dieu! par Votre Immaculée Conception, souvenez vous de m'assister toujours, mais specialment à l'heure de ma mort.* O holy Mother of God, by thy Immaculate Conception remember ever to assist me, but especially at the hour of my death."

She spent her evening recreation in speaking on holy and useful matters with the Duchess de Montmorency. About nine P. M., she wished to cross a large court to go to the Infirmary to see a sick sister, who was afraid of death, but as they would not let her, she sent the superioress to exhort her to put her confidence in God; then heaving a deep sigh, she exclaimed, "Alas! how much have we to do to prepare for death, and I the more especially." On the morrow she rose the first in the convent, as the most ardent in the search of the spouse whom the soul desires to find in prayer. She had

scarcely commenced her meditation before she felt the cold shiverings portending a fever; she did not, however, intermit her prayer, and after Prime she went to see the sick sister in the Infirmary, and spoke to her as much as the invalid desired, though her own fever increased rapidly. They wished her to go to bed, or else to communicate before the community, in order to avoid the cold. "No! no! I want nothing but to remain here with my God, in meditation, with my little book." (It was a collection that she had made of the chief instructions that our Blessed Father had given her for her interior life.) "Alas! give me at least the pleasure of communicating, especially to-day, for this dear day completes the thirty-one years since I began communicating daily, according to the command of our Blessed Father, unworthy though I am of such a grace." She thus went to the heavenly banquet, followed by the whole community; but mass was scarcely finished before she found herself compelled to go to bed.

The physician in the habit of attending on Madame de Montmorency was immediately sent for, and at first imagined her illness to proceed from a severe cold; but about four P. M. he changed his opinion, and assured our sisters that it was a dangerous fever, accompanied with inflammation in the chest. It would be perfectly useless for us to say, that she received every assistance and the best medical advice, as good Madame de Montmorency offered even her own life to God in lieu of her's, and the superi-

oress and all the sisters did the same; but God is a sovereign master; He wills what He wills, and to Him alone belongs the right of willing. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed for the Forty Hours, and prayers demanded of all the religious houses at Moulins; recourse was also had to alms, and vows were made and masses said in various churches.

God permitted that the wings of this dear dove, who longed to wing her flight into the eternal land, should be stronger than all the powers used to retain her on earth; and as her illness went on increasing, thus did it lead her the more speedily to her sovereign God. On Tuesday morning she bade our dear Sister Jeanne Theresa, who had accompanied her, to go and communicate, and make an act of resignation to the will of God, signifying thereby that they would shortly be separated. At one A. M. on the fourth day, the oppression increased to such a degree, that the physician declared that he had no longer any hope for her life, and ordered them to give her the Holy Viaticum. Madame de Montmorency, who had never left her room either by day or night, bursting into tears, besought her to swallow some of the relics of our Blessed Father; she replied, "Madame, I will do so, since such is your will; but was it not for the love I bear you, I should be opposed to it." She then took these holy relics in a reverential spirit, relics by which she, had often cured many, and said with a loud voice, with her hands joined in the attitude of prayers "O God, if it be Thy will, and to Thy greater glory,

restore to me, for the consolation of this dear lady, my health, through the intercession of our Blessed Father." But, perceiving that her words had deeply afflicted those present, she said, "We must, however, hope; it is possible that our Blessed Father will do something in favour of Madame de Montmorency;" thus showing that she was perfectly indifferent whether she died or whether she lived. About four A. M. she made a review of her conscience, as well as confessed to the Rev. Father de Lingendes, Rector of the Jesuit college, who assisted her in her last passage; God thus decreeing that she should be like to our Blessed Father, who was also assisted in his last hour by a Rev. Father of the same company. After this she sent for her confessor, who had accompanied her and our dear sister, her companion, begging of him to take leave in her name of the community at Annecy, and to say that she besought us to live in unity and reciprocal love, preserving the sincerity and simplicity of the spirit of the institute; and especially to be wary of desiring any office, as God was sufficient for everything.

Our Blessed Mother, who had always delighted in good order in the house of God, would not hear of their bringing her the Blessed Sacrament before the rising of the community. On hearing the getting-up bell, she prepared to receive the Bread of Life by acts of sincere humility, begging the community to pardon her for having given them so much disedification, as she felt no other regret than the not having observed the rules. The Blessed Sacrament being present, a few words were

spoken, in obedience to holy Church, of the faith in this august Sacrament; then the ardent flame of her love, making a last effort in spite of the oppression of her chest and her weak eyes, she said in a quick and strong voice, "I believe firmly, that my Lord Jesus Christ is present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar; I have always believed and confessed it; I adore and acknowledge Him to be my God and Redeemer, who has ransomed me by His precious blood; I would willingly lay down my life in defence of this belief, but I am not worthy of it; I confess that I look to be saved only by His infinite mercy." After Holy Communion, she said with great fervour, "Father, now that I have all my senses, I ask you to give me the Holy Oils, begging you to anoint me while there is time."

In the morning of that day she consulted with the Rev. Father de Lingendes, on the letter that she desired to write for the last time to all our congregations. This good Father was enraptured with her presence of mind and the solidity of her judgment while suffering so severely from fever and oppression; he conversed with her for a long time on the submission which the soul owed to the will of God, to which the patient paid great attention, showing that it pleased her much. They begged her at mid-night to allow them to bring her the Blessed Sacrament, on account of her weakness, and as she had already taken the Viaticum, she was obliged to fast; she replied, that she should be acting wrongly in so doing, as she had received the Holy

Viaticum, and that she was altogether unworthy of the grace she had enjoyed of communicating daily. She thus deprived herself of the Holy Communion that Thursday (the fifth day) in submission to God, her infirmity, the tranquillity of night, and conventual silence.

The physician administered to her some extraordinary remedies, and she obeyed his order, notwithstanding the great in convenienceo f remaining two hours without moving. Her illness increased while in this posture, and she was asked if it was not time to give her the Holy Oils, "No, not yet; there is no pressing reason; I am yet strong enough to wait." She sat on her bed about two P. M., and with perfect calmness reigning in her countenance, with a firm eye and an unfaltering voice, which gave some hopes of her being cured, she took leave of all our houses, and wrote some holy instructions of humility, simplicity, observance, and perfect union, which she left us as the last will and testament of a mother. After this letter had been fairly copied and signed, she said that now her conscience was in perfect peace, and she had nothing more to say.

But her ardent zeal so completely weakened our Blessed Mother, that she was quite languid; then awaking up, and imagining that she had spoken in her sleep, and that the Duchess de Montmorency was at her bed-side, she said, "Madame, did you hear me?" She was told that she had gone to supper in the refectory. "Do not disturb her," said the saint, "I only wished to talk to her

of the little rest I have just tasted in God." Taking advantage of the Duchess's absence, she spoke to our sisters, of the great gratitude they owed to God for having called this virtuous Princess to be of their order, and that they ought to honour and cherish her much; and she said to her on her return from the refectory, "I have been conversing with you in spirit, my dear Madame; but to-morrow, with God's help, I shall say more to you."

In the evening, her chest was more oppressed. On that night (the last of her life) she requested them to read to her the epitaph of S. Jerome on the death of S. Paula. She paid great attention to it, and repeated it several times, "What are we? we are but atoms by the side of these great and holy religious." She then had read to her the chapter wherein is contained an account of our Blessed Father's death, to be like him as well in death as in life. Madame de Montmorency was by her side when that chapter of the second book of the Love of God, was read, where he says, "*My Mother or I, for it is all one, is ill, and I ought to be perfectly indifferent to the will of God, as to whether the disease should prove stronger than the remedies, or the remedies than the disease.*" The saint looked with an eye beaming with love on that virtuous lady, who was weeping bitterly, and affectionately pressing her hand, said, "This is for you, Madame," with other holy words, to exhort her to perfect resignation, adding, that God had so united her to her heart, that notwithstanding her great desire to die, she would willingly live a little longer to serve her soul, for that her sorrow in separating from

her was more acute than the disease. During the remainder of the night, she had read to her the death of S. Monica, in the confessions of S. Augustine; and when they came to a passage where that great doctor says that his Mother did not care about dying out of her own country, she said, "That refers to us," thereby testifying that she was perfectly indifferent about dying away from the convent where she had made her profession.

About four A. M. she was asked how she felt, when she replied, "Nature is still struggling, and the spirit is suffering." A short time after, in accordance with her promise, she conversed in private with the Duchess for an hour and a half. She gave her benediction, through obedience, to all her daughters, absent as well as present, and especially to this community at Annecy. Through the whole of her illness she strictly observed the command of never asking or refusing anything; obeying with such exactitude all that the physician ordered, as to excite his admiration. On perceiving this, she said, "Sir, we are ordered to obey the physician."

About eight, A. M., on Friday, she asked to see the Rev. Father de Lingendes, by whom she desired to be assisted in her agony. She conversed with him for some time, relating to him every action of her whole life, and especially her present state, asking him if any change was necessary in order to prepare for death. She told him that God had given her such repose, simplicity, and confidence in His goodness, as to wish for nothing but His good plea-

sure ; and that our Blessed Father and one of our prelates had confirmed her in this. The good religious strengthened her in this her peace. She told him what she had in the little bag that was round her neck, begging him to hold it in her hand during her agony, and to bury it with her. At last, feeling herself getting weaker and weaker, she begged him to give her the Holy Oils, which she received with such fervour and ardour, as to respond herself to all the prayers. This being finished, the Rev. Father, kneeling by her bed, begged her to give him and all her daughters her benediction, for the whole institute. She excused herself, urging that he ought rather to bless her, which he was obliged to do ; but he compelled her by obedience to do what he had asked ; with her hands clasped, and her eyes lifted up to heaven, she said, "This, my dear daughters, is the last time that I shall speak to you, since such is the will of God ; I earnestly recommend you to pay a strict obedience to your superiors, regarding our Lord in them ; be perfectly united one with another, but with the true union of hearts," repeating these last words, *mais de l'union des coeurs*, several times. "Live in great simplicity, and preserve the integrity of perfect obedience ; by this means you will draw down on yourselves the benedictions of the Divine Mercy, which I earnestly beseech Him to bestow on all the daughters of the Visitation." After having given her benediction, she said again to all the community, "My daughters, prize not this life, which is passing away ; think often that

you will one day be in the same state that you now see me; that you must render an account to God of all your thoughts, words, and actions; only prize that which may be useful to your salvation and perfection."

The Father Rector, who saw that all our dear sisters were in tears, was himself also deeply affected at so generous, and yet so affecting a sight; and fearing that our Blessed Mother would weaken herself too much in continuing to speak, he desired the sisters to retire. "The time has arrived, my children, for you to separate, and to give the farewell embrace." They all drew nigh in their turn to kiss her hand, whilst she, looking at them with a truly maternal eye, whispered to each something that would tend to their perfection. After she had spoken with all the sisters, the Rev. Father begged her to tell him something that would be for his own edification. She replied to him in a spirit of great humility, thanking him and the company of Jesus for the trouble which he had taken in assisting her on her last day; he then knelt devoutly, and kissed her hand, having a high estimation of her sanctity.

From this time the dying saint only spoke of God, only thought of His goodness, and kept looking alternately at the crucifix, and a statue of our Lady of Pity, which was near her. From time to time the Rector spoke to her of something holy, and said some prayers, to which she always responded. She listened with great attention to the Passion, and the profession of faith, according to the Council of Trent, which was read to her in

French, and in which she expressed her belief so firmly, that she was ready to die in its support. She often repeated the versicle :—

Maria mater gratiæ	Mother of Grace, O Mary blest,
Mater misericordiæ ;	To Thee, sweet Fount of love, we fly;
Tu nos ab hoste protege	Shield us through life, and take us hence,
Et hora mortis suscipe.	To Thy dear bosom, when we die.

She requested the Rev. Father to make the commendation of her soul, and while he was repeating the prayers, she begged him to repeat them several times, as her agony was long, and once, while he was repeating them in French, she exclaimed, "O Jesus, how beautiful are those prayers." She desired to be left alone, but suddenly called out for the Father Rector, and said, "O Father, how frightful are the judgments of God!" He asked her if that troubled her. "No," said she, "but I assure you that the judgments of God are very terrible." The physician having come to see her, she thanked him cordially for all his care, and told him that she only wanted his prayers. He wished her to take some jelly, but she replied that it would be useless ; she then asked the Rev. Father his advice, who replied that it behoved her to prolong her life, to employ every moment for the greater glory of God. From that time she took everything that was given her, without saying a word. He also told her that as God has breathed into us the spirit of life, so also at our death He calls to Himself the spirit and the soul

which He had breathed into us; this caused her to exclaim with delight, "Oh! how sweet is this thought." He asked her if she hoped that our Blessed Father, with our deceased mothers and sisters, would come to meet her. "Yes, I believe so, as he made me that promise." She solemnly renewed her vows, according to the formulary of our profession, after which her countenance appeared as if on fire, and her body much convulsed. The Rev. Father asked her if she would like them to bring her a mitre of our Blessed Father's, which is preserved in our convent at Moulins, as a precious relic; "No!" said she, "if it be for my health or my cure." "But," said the Father, "it is that the will of God should be accomplished in you." She then kissed it reverently, and also a statue of our Lady. From that moment all anxiety passed away, and her fever increased.

The community was sent for to repeat the commendation of her soul; she took the crucifix in her right hand, and in her left a blessed taper, to appear thus before her Well-beloved. Father de Lingendes said that her acute sufferings were merely the clamours which preceded the arrival of the Spouse, that He was at hand, and asked her if she would not go and meet Him; "Yes, Father," said she distinctly, "I am going; Jesus, Jesus, Jesus." With these words of love she died, or rather, she began to live, and to appear in the true life with Jesus in glory. She expired while the Father Rector was pronouncing these words, "Subvenite Sancti Dei; ocurrite Angeli Domini suscipientes animam ejus offerentes eam in conspectu Altis-

simi; Come to her assistance, ye saints of God; come forth to meet her, ye Angels of the Lord; receiving her soul, offering it in the sight of the Most High," on the 13th of December, 1641, about six or seven P. M., in the seventy-first year of her age; of which she spent nine in a state of widowhood, and thirty-one in the conventual life, when she died according to her own desire, as a simple inferior without office, and holding the last rank; whereupon, according to the word of Jesus Christ, we conclude that she is great in the kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OF THE HONOUR PAID TO HER MEMORY.

The soul of this good and loyal servant having entered into the joy of the Lord, we were plunged into deep grief. The blessed body which had sheltered so worthy a guest, remained so lovely after death that people were never tired of looking at it. Death did not change her countenance, but it preserved that serenity which she had during her life. All the sisters came one after another to kiss the holy Name of Jesus, which she had herself engraved on her heart. The letters were of the size of an inch, well formed, except the S, which was not quite finished. The cross was below, as typical of her being crucified to all that is in this world; and even in the inferior part of her will, the world was crucified to her. The Father found

the little bag of which she had spoken to him well sown, and on it a picture of the Blessed Virgin holding her Divine Son, and within a long profession of faith, written by her own hand and signed with her blood, her vows, prayers, and a complete resignation of herself into the hands of God. A copy was taken of these papers, and then placed on her bosom (according to her wish) with some relics. On the following morning the body was laid out in the choir, (according to our custom), and all the town hastened thither; so high was the esteem in which she was held, that to satisfy the people we were obliged to bring the body close to the railing, every one desiring to touch her body with their rosaries, and other articles of devotion. Deputations from the various religious orders and the different parishes chanted the *De Profundis* and the *Libera* in the church of our sisters. The canons of the Collegiate church of Notre Dame came with an excellent choir. The Jesuits had their altars clothed in black, and all said mass for the deceased, whom they invoked in their hearts, and it was unanimously bruited abroad in the city, that a saint had just expired at S. Mary's.

The Duchess de Montmorency, wishing to return her to us dead whom we had lent her living, ordered them to open and embalm her body, whereby they discovered the cause of her death, having discovered the diseased lung, which was full, on the left side, of matter and corrupted blood; her liver, heart, and other parts, were very healthy; and the physicians have attested that they never saw so healthy a brain, nor a

better formed head, and, therefore, we must not be astonished at her judgment being so good, and her mind so complete.

The body was embalmed, and they made as much haste as they could, for fear of the citizens of Moulins raising any opposition, which would have been the case had they not evinced their respect and submission to Madame de Montmorency. This worthy friend, feeling that it was but right to return us this precious deposit, superintended the removal, placing the body in a leaden coffin, and then in one ornamented with iron to make it more portable, and then placed it in a carriage with a large mortuary cloth. Our confessor, M. Marcher, and M. Aviat, confessor to our house at Moulins, with a few of the officers of the Duchess de Montmorency, accompanied it; and inasmuch as this sacred treasure was by no means secure as long as it was in France, they proceeded as rapidly and as secretly as possible, to the great mortification of our dear sisters at Lyons, who learnt, on the festival of the Nativity of our Lord, that this blessed body had passed through that city without daring to stop for even a short while. They halted at Montluel, a small town, where our poor sisters of S. Amour took refuge when expelled from their convent in the time of war. The citizens of Montluel ran in crowds, and our dear sisters spent the night round her coffin, believing that they had there nothing to fear. M. Marcher gave notice to our sisters at Belley of the precious relic that would be deposited with them for a while. As soon as it was

known in the town, tapers and flambeaux were brought from all sides to be set before the body. In less than two hours the church was hung in black, and the piety of the Bishop of Belley was so great, that, in imitation of S. Epiphanius, he went out clad in his pontifical garments, attended by all his clergy, to receive and introduce into his town the Paula of our age, rendering her such honours as were worthy of his piety, and the sanctity of her whom he venerated. This body, conveyed thus pompously to our sisters, was surrounded with so many lights, that they have been taken for several funerals going on. They watched this precious deposit till the morning, when the Bishop, returning with his clergy, the theologal preached a beautiful discourse on the virtues of our saint. A solemn mass was sung, and all saw this treasure, which they could not preserve, leave their town. It was received at S. Lambert Seissel and Rumilly with like reverence and devotion. It reposed at Seissel, in the church of the Bernardines, where the dear mother of this holy reform showed, with all her community, marks of her devotion towards our Blessed Mother, with whom she was much united in heart. Our sisters of Rumilly, as became daughters, spent the night round her coffin, and had their church hung in black covered with white stars.

On the 30th of December this blessed body entered our city; it reposed in the church of the Sepulchre, where the Dean, with the canons of his Collegiate Church, went to take it, and, ac-

companied by the people, brought us this precious deposit. It was a thing very remarkable, that at the moment her body entered the convent our poor hearts, which, since the news of our loss, had been so oppressed that we had not ceased crying, were convinced, by an internal joy and a spiritual certitude, of the glory of this blessed soul, who gave us her body that it might dry up our tears, and we could only say, "Oh! she is in heaven;" and "how happy are we in having such an advocate with God." This feeling was not confined to our community, but was common to all those of our Institute; and we heard, by letters that we received from our convents, that, on hearing the news of her loss, their hearts were likewise oppressed with grief at our common and irreparable loss, but in sweet resignation and perfect confidence of the glory of this blessed soul, and of her zeal with God for her daughters and all devoted to her. It would be superfluous to say how we paid our last duties to our mother with funeral prayers, solemn High Mass, and other marks of our esteem, as far as our simplicity would allow us. Nearly all our houses did the same, as may be seen by the great number of orations, rather panegyrical than funeral, which were sent us, printed as well as MS.

We know for certainty that two of the greatest and holiest servants of God that were in the world saw her ascend into glory; the one as an humble spouse, with her cross in her hand, to be received by her Well-Beloved at the nuptial festival; the other as a globe of fire, uniting itself

to another globe (and that is our Blessed Father), and thus united, these two globes were lost in the great eternal globe. We know, moreover, that three other souls worthy of credit saw her in spirit in the state of glory on the day of her death, which they did not know, being a great distance from the place where it had happened. We were not alone in giving our holy Mother so soon after her death the appellation of Blessed, it being the general wish; and persons of great learning, dignity, and piety perceiving our reserve, bade us not to fear; for that if some few objected, we should not, therefore, leave off honouring her whom God wished to honour, and who had served Him by so long and holy a life. It was indeed a subject of great consolation to us, that our Blessed Mother was rather praised by those who were not connected with her than by ourselves; and we should have no slight task to perform were we merely to mention the names of those who were the most distinguished. We have letters in our possession from bishops, abbots, provincials of orders, superiors, religious, noblemen, great and true servants of God, who all call her Blessed, and beg some relic of her, and invoke her in private. But since she is truly worthy of praise, I shall here mention a circumstance which happened to a very great and good servant of God.

Invoking our Blessed Father in his mass, he was obliged to stop, and could go no further, when our Lord said to him, "Why hast thou not invoked my other servant?" thus showing him that if we invoked our Blessed Father we should invoke the

Blessed Mother also, inasmuch as these holy souls are in eternity, where is the consummation of perfect charity, as if they were but one soul, as God had united them in this world. From this time all the community of which this good devout person was a member, placed themselves under the protection of our Blessed Father and Mother; and God began to make this a common practice, as several of those who had masses said in our church ordered one in honour of our Blessed Father, and another of our Blessed Mother, or of both together.

Her body was placed in a temporary sepulchre until God gave us the means to build our church and the chapels for these two saints. It was beside our grille opposite to the tomb of our Blessed Father, which is on the other side of the altar, being adorned with these precious relics like the ark with its two seraphim of purest gold. This occasioned the Dean of Notre Dame, our spiritual father, to place the following verses in our church :—

Mise au côté du grand homme de Dieu
Qui par ses soins se la rendit pareille,
Tu vois, passant, en cet auguste lieu
De notre temps la seconde marveille.

The other,

De l'Institut qui fait profession
De délivrer l'âme de passion,
Bien qu'elle soit en faiblecorps en close
Le Pere lá, la Mère ici repose.

We are aware that God has already manifested the glory of His servant by miraculous graces; but we leave it to time to discover these miracles, and bring this second part of our memoirs to a close by a thing worthy to be handed down to posterity, to show that no hand can unite us more closely than that of charity. As soon as the decease of our Blessed Mother was known in all our houses, man's judgment was deceived, in that it had been believed that when this holy mother had closed her eyes, the great union of pure charity and cordial friendship, which had kept our convents hitherto united, would be dissipated; for, having paid the last duties to our Blessed Mother, to show that her intentions were still of effect in her institute, nearly all our convents, the superiors as well as the communities, sent express messengers to renew their union with us, protesting that they looked up to this convent, as in the life-time of our Blessed Father and Mother, as the depository of their bodies and their intentions, as the succour, confidence, keystone, and object of deference of the whole order; and this has often drawn tears from our eyes, and caused us to bless God, who has made His works exist by His grace alone, when He called His workmen to Himself. This also has made us hope, that as charity endures for ever, our Blessed Father and Mother, having founded our little Institute, which divinely united their souls, and this charity, exercising itself towards the weak and the infirm in the spirit of gentleness, openness, and humble affectionateness, this holy virtue will, with a sort of sweet violence

lodge us in His Bosom who is the Essential and Eternal Charity. It remains, then, for us to see what it is which causes our Blessed Mother still to live in our memory and imitation, namely, her holy practices and virtues.

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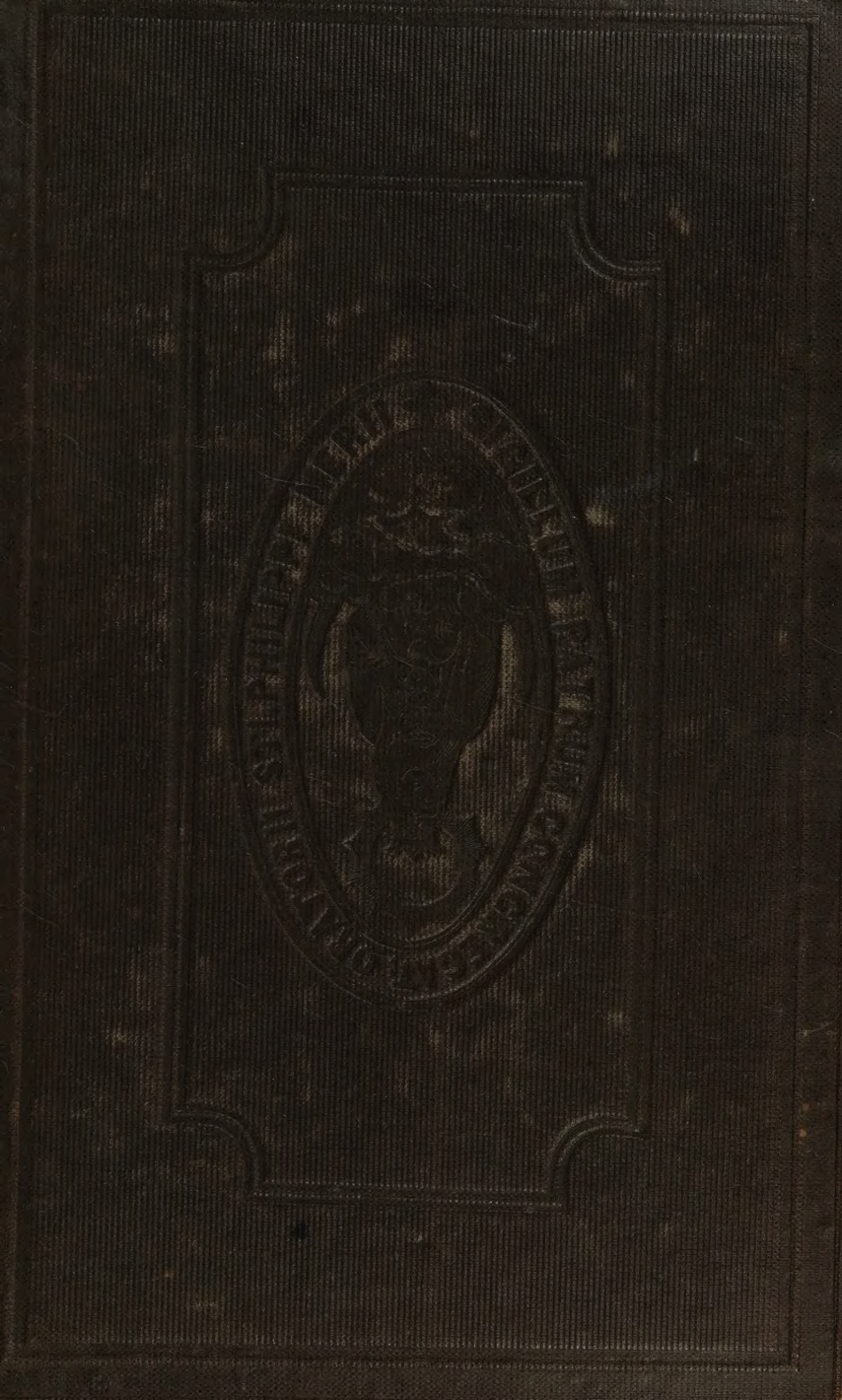
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